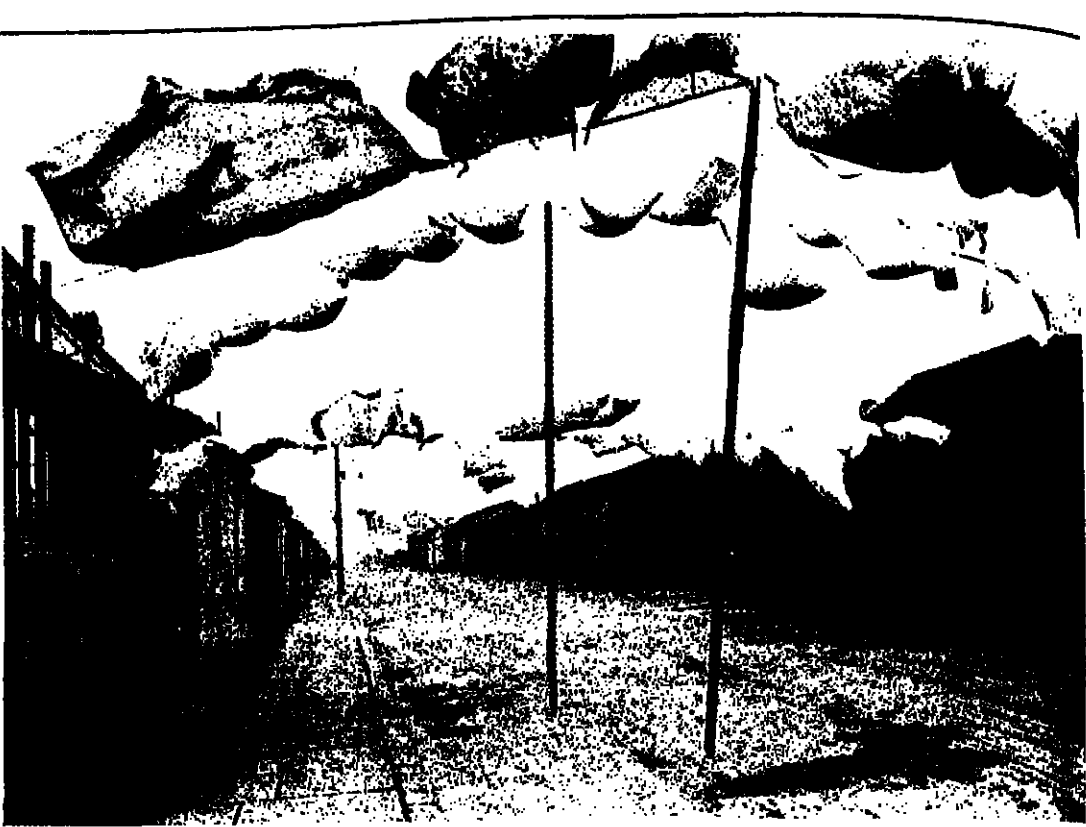


he was indeed the first to formulate as part of systematic historical theory that only with the advent of capitalism, in Giddens's words, "is there established a constant emphasis upon, and capacity for, the chronic expansion of the forces of production".

There is, to be sure, much controversy among Marxists themselves about the exact routes taken by human societies in emerging from the earliest tribal communities, and the later sequence of stages; and even some recognition of that "unique" character of Western capitalism which preoccupied Weber. None of this, however, contradicts the fundamental thesis of historical materialism that social development is essentially connected with the growth of human productive powers. If Marx's theory of history, or any alternative general theory, is to be given up, then we must either confine ourselves to the short term and to narrative history, or else adopt the kind of intermediate position which Giddens, partially in accord with Weber and with some of his later followers, advocates in the form of "episodic characterizations" of particular long-term transformations (for example, the emergence of class-divided societies from tribal communities, or the transition from feudalism to capitalism).

But this conception, although it does have the merit of providing a framework for considering, say, the question of a transition from capitalism to socialism as the major transformation of the present age, poses some problems of its own. How, for instance, are we to define the "episodes" themselves? Is some general criterion involved? To take a particular case, should we distinguish as one episode a transition from feudalism to capitalism, or rather the advent of industrial society, as some social scientists would prefer? Furthermore, since the episodes selected are very often the stages differentiated in Marx's theory, how strong is the argument against attempting to link the episodes together in a series, perhaps in a new way?

This indicates a more general problem arising from the very numerous critical reassessments of Marx's economic interpretation. The criticisms, of diverse kinds, have undoubtedly drawn attention to serious difficulties, though many of them are such as confront any sociological theory. But will the outcome be a heavily revised Marxist theory, which is one prospect held out by much recent work, or an entirely new theory, equal or superior in its scope and explanatory (or at least illuminating) power? Of the latter there is as yet all too little sign.



Monday's washing: billowing bunting for the streets of Bolton, photographed by Humphrey Spender (see the caption on p 271 for publication details).

Extending the Republic

By Kenneth S. Lynn

REGINALD HOREMAN:

Race and Manifest Destiny
The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism
367pp. Harvard University Press.
\$15.75.
0 674 74572 8

Self-criticism is now so rampant in American culture that many historians simply cannot deal with the principal achievements of the American past unless they can think of ways to discredit them. A case in point is Reginald Horman's *Race and Manifest Destiny*, which would have us believe that the nation's most spectacular accomplishment in the first half of the nineteenth century, to wit, the extension of its principles of free democratic republicanism across the width of an entire continent, was first and foremost a victory for a racist ideology of quasi-Hitlerian viciousness.

In Mr Horman's judgment the United States in 1800 was a much less prejudiced society than it would shortly become. Both Christian doctrine and Enlightenment thought confirmed the belief of Jefferson and his contemporaries that mankind consisted of one human species, and that the physical differences between peoples, as well as the differences in their levels of civilization, were the result of environment. If the leaders of opinion in post-Revolutionary America relegated blacks to a fixed and lower racial category, they thought of the Indians in their midst as fellow human beings who could and would be taught to improve themselves, until finally their habits and customs would become indistinguishable from those of white American farmers. As for the new nation's attitude towards admitting strangers from Europe, a society that had been formed by the descendants of English, Dutch, Scottish, Irish, German, and Swedish immigrants had no qualms about keeping its doors wide open. Jefferson's America saw itself, in sum, as a vast laboratory, in which religious and scientific ideas about the unity of mankind would be vindicated in practice.

By 1830, the generous views of the founding fathers had been all but swept away by "an emotional tide of racial theory". On the basis of evidence ranging from supposedly exact scientific measurements of cranial cavities to impressionistic studies of cultural variation, a number of European writers had been arguing for decades that there were "innate, unalterable" differences between races. When Gobineau published his *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races*

Humaines in 1854, he drew on more than half a century of European literature on the subject. That American thinkers changed their minds about the unity of mankind was partly because European thinkers had, too.

Yet Horman stresses that "the peculiarities of the American experience" endowed the American acceptance of the arguments of special racial destiny with a "unique" fervour. What first caused the American people to become interested in the idea that the white race was innately superior to all others, and that Anglo-Saxons like themselves (l) were the *crème de la crème*, was the presence of the Indian. For the dream of uplifting this semi-naked creature had given way to the desire to strip him of his valuable lands, and it was easier to do so if one believed that he was nothing but a wild beast who could not possibly be domesticated. In an absurd philosophy of racism, white America found the perfect rationale for its savage dispossession of the allegedly savage red man.

Racist ideas were also embraced by the masters of Negro slaves, and they furnished ammunition as well to bigots who wished to restrict immigration. The heyday of racism did not arrive, however, until it became necessary to find sanction for a series of assaults on Mexico. The United States' annexation of Texas and its seizure of California were stunning blows to the Mexicans, but as long as the Americans could blame the Mexicans' suffering on their own racial

weakness, rather than on what Horman refers to as the "whites' relentless search for wealth and power", the conscience of the victorious nation was untroubled. "Manifest Destiny", Horman says, was the slogan of a malevolent ideology that assigned non-Anglo-Saxon races to an inferior human status in order to justify American imperialism. Some imperialists believed that the United States should be content to be the principal power on the North American continent; others talked of a hemispheric hegemony stretching from pole to pole; still others argued for a thrust into the Pacific as well. But no matter how the limits of its territorial ambitions were defined, the American super-race was bloodily committed to "exploitation and destruction".

The thinkers who assigned intellectual and moral characteristics to races were making a scientific system out of stereotypes; they were reducing real men and women to caricatures. Horman, of course, has no regard for racist science. Yet in his own way he is, no less misleadingly simplistic.

To begin with, *Race and Manifest Destiny* vastly underestimates the difficulties that racist doctrines created for a Bible-reading nation. How could the idea of a superior, separate race be reconciled with the story of one human species descended in just a few thousand years from Adam and Eve? Horman's answer is that "the logical inconsistencies and contradictions were ignored", but the truth is that

they were not. Some scientists sought to avoid a direct attack on the Bible by arguing that although God had originally made Adam and Eve, He had interposed Himself in later epochs in order to permit racial diversity. The Bible, however, referred to Genesis, not polygenesis, and every ingenious attempt to resolve the conflict between science and religion was confounded by that fact. As a result, early nineteenth-century Americans could not escape from ambivalence. Caught between their eagerness to accept the latest scientific word about racial differences and their inability to disbelieve the biblical account of the Creation, they followed a wavering course in both thought and deed.

Horman, alas, is more interested in pursuing straight lines. He points out that a vigorous movement to restrict immigration sprang up in the mid-1840s, but neglects to add that no policy of restriction was enacted into law. He cites the influential opinion of the theologian Theodore Parker that the African was innately inferior to the Caucasian, but fails to refer to a best-selling novel called *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which insisted that all human beings were the same in the sight of the Lord. He marshals a number of literary quotations that express contempt for the bestial Indian, but never once makes mention of the noble red men in Fenimore Cooper's enormously popular *Leatherstocking Tales*.

It is, however, in his central argument that Mr Horman most fully displays his unwillingness to deal with historical complexity. For in interpreting Manifest Destiny ideology solely as a racist philosophy he strips it of its political and economic appeal. No historian can possibly account for the impact of Manifest Destiny on the American imagination unless he conceives of it, as the late Frederick Merk did some years ago in a marvellous book called *Mission and Manifest Destiny*, as the greatest of all reform programmes of the reform-minded 1840s.

Into the lands taken from Mexico and ceded by Britain, the imperial Americans brought a set of ideals very different from those which the British took with them to India or the French to southwest Asia. A free, confederate, self-governing republic, three thousand miles wide; that was the basic vision that informed Manifest Destiny ideology, and eight propositions were subsumed under it:

- 1) Individual freedom and local autonomy.
- 2) Religious freedom, albeit there was some disagreement among the leading ideologues about how to handle the overwhelmingly Catholic population of the American Southwest.

3) Social egalitarianism. Manifest Destiny envisaged a kingdom without a king, or an aristocracy, or hereditary privilege, or the distinctions of any kind.

4) Political democracy, based on wide suffrage, fair elections, no limits on Presidential power. There was no room for dictatorial Mexican or otherwise, in the Manifest Destiny scheme.

5) Power to the people in economic as well as political terms. The chiefs of Spanish land barons would be overwhelmed by the transatlantic westward of the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farmer.

6) Access to government-owned land on easy-payment terms. Some of the more audacious Manifest Destiny reformers even talked of homesteads. In any event, the spectacle of people starving in the sight of fallow land - which in the 1840s - would not be permitted to take place in the American West.

7) Economic democracy in business affairs as well as in agriculture. The spokesmen for Manifest Destiny were advocates of free-enterprise competition, both at home and abroad. Professor Merk points out in this regard that in 1846, at the flood-tide of Manifest Destiny sentiment, the US Congress passed the Walker tariff which for the first time lowered tariff barriers to the point where the United States was almost engaged in free trade.

8) New homes for political refugees and other hard-pressed immigrants from Europe. "Long live our country prove itself the asylum of the oppressed", said a Destiny-minded Alabama Congressman in 1845. "Let its institutions and its people be extended far and wide, and when the terrors of despotism shall have dated other portions of the globe, and the votary of liberty be expelled to beset himself in the ark, let this government be the Ararat on which it shall rest."

A racist rhetoric also helped to justify Manifest Destiny. There can be no denying this fact. On the other hand, the power of this rhetoric was considerably offset by a countervailing Christian rhetoric. But far more important than the issue of whether the American people did or did not consider themselves a special race was the fact that Manifest Destiny was a mighty engine of democratic capitalism, by means of which a colonialist nation avoided the stagnation of the Pacific colonies, only to achieve great achievements in the history of human freedom. It is a sign of the times in which we live that *Manifest Destiny* has been turned into an anti-American

JAY FELLOWS:

Ruskin's Maze
Mastery and Madness in His Art
284pp. Oxford: Princeton University Press. £17.50.
0 691 08479 2

ROBERT HEWISON (Editor):
New Approaches to Ruskin
Thirteen Essays

229pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £10.95.
0 7100 0915 1

JOHN DIXON HUNT and FAITH M. HOLLAND (Editors):
The Ruskin Polygon
Essays on the Imagination of John Ruskin

284pp. Manchester University Press. £30.
0 7190 0834 4

JOHN DIXON HUNT:
The Wider Sea
A Life of John Ruskin
512pp. Dent. £15.95.
0 460 04547 4

"Visible infinities" - the phrase is Carlyle's, but it usefully characterizes Ruskin's obsessive preoccupation with the absolute and the contingent, with the general truth and the detail, the vision and the particularity. The man who wrote "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what he saw in a plain way . . . To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion", certainly believed that the infinite was contained in the visible, and thus that the function of the art critic was to be far more than that of pictorial

insight, happy juxtapositions, a genuine sympathy with Ruskin's mode of thought; on the other an unflinching self-indulgence, unRuskinian lapses into the obscurity of jargon, so that the reader has to lose control entirely and submit himself to the experience of reading, or in Bloom's term "struggling" with, Fellows.

This sort of abject surrender is not one Ruskin himself ever required of his readers. His didacticism, his clarity and his very carefully defined relationship with these readers, whether the working men of England or the undergraduate audience at a Slade lecture, were all part of the tense superstructure of rationality Ruskin needed to impose upon his material. Fellows relinquishes this rational superstructure to a great extent, and in the process he ceases to read or interpret Ruskin, and begins to parody the inner movement of Ruskin's subconscious mind. That it is possible to do this tells us something valuable about Ruskin, even though Fellows's method *in extenso* is, in my opinion, self-defeating. It reminds us that under the rational, analytic rhetoric, the earnest desire to instruct and improve others, Ruskin's was a creative rather than a critical imagination. Moving towards Coleridge calls "its appropriate form", Ruskin produces a curious hybrid, a sort of intellectual and spiritual autobiography - perhaps even more an autobiography of the imagination, of which all his books are part. Both Arrowsmith in his essay, and Fellows in his book, are refining on the process that Ruskin himself initiated, not applying a different discipline to it. There is a danger that this may become second-hand in the last resort; better surely to read Ruskin himself than to read a critic doing what he did, and inevitably not doing it so well.

Turner and Turner only could follow, and render . . . that mystery of decided line, that distinct, sharp, visible but unintelligible and inextricable richness, which, examined part by part, is to the eye nothing but confusion and defeat; but which, taken as a whole, is all unity, symmetry and truth.

In "The Truth of Space" he attributes the same qualities to Nature herself: "Nature is never distinct and never vacant, always mysterious but always abundant; you always see something, but you never see all." This perception is very much of his age. What Alice Meynell in her elegant and much neglected *John Ruskin* (1900) calls "his command of numerous truths" is a Coleridgean awareness of dynamic growth in the inner and the outer worlds of thought and nature. To the romantic mind the multiplicity of the world is of a different sort from the plenitude and abundance perceived by earlier periods. It is not pre-ordained, pre-organized and controlled by a beneficent Creator. The artist himself must dominate it, in some way without

falsifying it; he must perceive its organic unity. Through observation and perception, through the association of visible infinities, he must recognize its ultimate design.

Several of the essays in John Dixon Hunt's and Faith Holland's collection, *The Ruskin Polygon*, deal with Ruskin's articulation - reticulation might be the better word - of certain motifs or images. William Arrowsmith's "Ruskin's Fireflies" is the most subtle and elaborate of these, and, exhilarating though it is, towards the end comes a feeling that the infectious nature of Ruskin's confusion, as well as his enthusiasm, has its own dangers. The pursuit of an obsession through so many instances, the unravelling of so many associations can become wearisome, as may be seen in Jay Fellows's notorious attempt to write as Ruskin wrote, think as Ruskin thought, and with a kind of mad, inspired logic assume the whole Ruskinian burden of complexity. Ruskin repeats the tour de force of *The Falling Distance* and betrays the same virtues and vices: on the one hand flashes of insight, happy juxtapositions, a genuine sympathy with Ruskin's mode of thought; on the other an unflinching self-indulgence, unRuskinian lapses into the obscurity of jargon, so that the reader has to lose control entirely and submit himself to the experience of reading, or in Bloom's term "struggling" with, Fellows.

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But both these authors pay Ruskin a high compliment in their imitations. North American critics have an honourable history of not falling to recognize Ruskin's stature. It was Northrop Frye who first (in *The Anatomy of Criticism*) refuted Arnold's strictures and turned the accusation of provinciality back onto Arnold's own head; John Rosenberg's *The Darkening Glass* was the first full-scale examination since the war of the extent of Ruskin's imaginative range. Barlier English critics (with some exceptions, like Lord Clark) had been more preoccupied with Ruskin's life than with his work, and his reputation here between the wars sank into obscurity. But a revival of interest has taken place in the last twenty years. Robert Hewison's *Argument of the Eye*, John Unrau's *Looking at Architecture with Ruskin* and Jeanne Clegg's *Ruskin and Venice* have all combined with considerable skill the continuing biographical interest with a critical approach to his ideas and imagination. Hewison's collection of essays, *New Approaches to Ruskin*, is an

interesting contrast to the largely transatlantic character of *The Ruskin Polygon*.

How much cooler the English approach is in pursuit of the image and the association! Nick Shrimpton, following up "Rust and Dust" in *Unrau's Last and Fors Clegens* compresses into a short and elegantly written essay influences on Ruskin's style and thought as familiar as Carlyle, as obscure as Arthur Phelps, and as unexpected as Dickens. He might even have reinforced his evidence for the last by citing Ruskin's essay *Fiction Fair and Foul*, where a brilliantly destructive attack on the morbidity of *Bleak House* is preceded in the opening paragraphs by an account of the suburban squalor of Dulwich which falls quite naturally into the cadences of Dickens's later style. Dixon Hunt's essay on the science of *Proserpine* is written with a similar unpretentious lucidity. She teases out the associations of the various examples of flowers Ruskin chooses, their mythological significance, their association with death and therefore their curious analogical application to the affairs of Ruskin's own life, especially the death of Rose La Touche. There is some overlapping between the two books - among others, Brian Maidment and Jeffrey Spear contribute to both, Maidment usefully tracing Ruskin's later influence, and the role of the Severns in the latter part of his life and after his death. (It is odd, though, to find him referring to Lady Birkenhead, whose *Unlucky Friends* constituted the first defence of the Severns' guardianship, as "Miss Birkenhead" throughout.)

An excellent piece of analysis by John Rosenberg, whose involvement with *For Clavara* has always been particularly illuminating, and contributions by George Landow and Jeffrey Spear make Hewison's collection a substantial as well as an attractive contribution to Ruskin studies. The level of contribution to *The Ruskin Polygon* is more uneven, but Jeffrey Spear's expurgated selection from the Ruskin-Norton correspondence is important for the light it throws onto what must have been the closest of Ruskin's male friendships. Richard A. Mackessey's "Proust on the Margins of Ruskin" is a good introduction to his most fascinating and fruitful literary connection. The architectural contributions are original and authoritative, and the whole book (though it is appealingly overpriced) like Hewison's indicates the serious level at which studies of Ruskin are proceeding today.

Before the Second World War, details of Ruskin's life were gradually being discovered, and had assembled and assembled biographies and semi-biographies had appeared, when, in 1949, the most substantial, intelligent and sympathetic of them, Derrick Leon's *Ruskin, the Great Victorian*, was published. Since then there has undoubtedly been a need for a new life which would take account of new discoveries: the facts that Helen Viljoen so laboriously collected about the Ruskin family; James Dearden's patient researches; the accounts by Mary Layens of Ruskin's marriage; the letters edited by Harold Shapiro and Van Alken Burd; the latter's thorough and detailed account of the tragic relationship between Ruskin and Rose La Touche. All these new findings need to be brought together in the form of a re-assessment of Ruskin's life and work, and John Dixon Hunt has provided us with one which exhibits the qualities we have come to expect of him - an easy command of complicated material, a shrewd and sympathetic judgment, and a capacity to combine fluent narrative with a lucid and convincing exposition of an artist's life and his work.

The early stages of Ruskin's life are especially successfully treated in this biography. Professor Dixon Hunt restores to a proper place in our attention, stressing its imaginative power. His quotations from it are

immediately arresting - the strange beauty of Italy with its cypress-haunted landscape; the brilliant Ruskinian flashes of perception (of a sunset "It was not colour; it was conflagration"); the early connexion in his mind between architecture and society as well as between architecture and the picturesque. But most impressive is Dixon Hunt's treatment of Ruskin's early relation with his parents and his marriage. He is discreet and generous in his account of the latter, scrupulously avoiding apportioning blame between Ruskin and Effie. The effect of his unpartisan approach is to make us understand the whole unhappy business much better. His suggestion that it was very likely Effie's period rather than the unexpected sight of public hair which disinclined Ruskin from consummating the marriage on the wedding night, is persuasive. Ruskin's own childish egotism at this stage and his utter refusal to contemplate the idea of begetting children (who would interfere with his work), account for his continually deferring the full relationship. By the time even Ruskin must have begun to consider the state of their marriage abnormal, it was too late; encouraged by his father and mother, he had come actively to dislike Effie, and could see no possible reason for making love to her. The most he wanted was to have her out of his life. Dixon Hunt gives no support, however, to the idea Effie and Millais studiously fostered afterwards, that Ruskin had tried to encourage her to compromise herself with young men. Millais especially, in order to give her husband grounds for divorce. Ruskin was at once too

honest, too naïve and too self-absorbed to have detachedly and cunningly devised such a scheme. Instead he willingly submitted himself to the humiliation of an annulment, and behaved with conspicuous generosity to Millais after it.

No one ever comes well out of an account of an unhappy marriage and separation. Ruskin was deliberately insensitive to his young wife's feelings. His jealous and doting parents encouraged the growing coldness between the two of them. Effie undoubtedly deserves our sympathy at this stage. It was only later, and after her successful and happy marriage to Millais, that she revealed her essentially vindictive and trivial nature. She was happy enough to enjoy the social position marriage and the Ruskin's wealth gave her, but resentment had festered over the years, and must have originated in Ruskin's physical indifference and in his conduct having put her, when she fell in love with Millais, into a potentially scandalous position though he took no advantage of it. Her communication with Mrs La Touche through Mrs Cowper-Temple is the most disgraceful episode in the whole miserable affair.

Dixon Hunt is less successful in dealing with the great crisis of Ruskin's life, his infatuation with Rose La Touche. This whole ten-year affair was characteristic of the self-absorption of Ruskin's nature; everything was referred back to it; it became in later life the clue to the maze of his imaginative being. Yet no clear picture emerges from this biography of the attraction she held for him (her mother had originally

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been the appeal), or of her character and her motives or of his attraction for her. Van Aiken Burd's detailed study makes it difficult to add any facts, but Rose is too important a figure in Ruskin's imaginative - as well as in his real - life to be played down. This does not seem to be a deliberate ploy on Dixon Hunt's part. There is an effect of speeding up about his last chapters which suggests a finish against time. Ruskin's last phase, his relation with the Severns, for instance, does not come across nearly as vividly as his early life and relationships. This gives a slightly top-sided effect to the book, and there is a lack of reflection on other figures than Ruskin himself in the later phase which accounts for a mild sense of anti-climax.

Yet this is an important book and a good one. Ruskin is the ideal subject for biography, and there is room for further interpretative lives now that so much material has been unearthed and ordered. Though he was unattractive in character in so many ways, the extraordinary intellectual and personal charm of this spoiled, self-loving and self-lonely, disappointed man, and the sheer capacity of his mind and imagination, have captured the sympathy of innumerable subsequent writers, scholars and readers. He possessed the power of inspiring others, and still does.

It comes at first as a shock to discover that Ruskin, not the more exquisite and aesthetic Pater, was the great influence on, indeed the master of, Proust. Yet there is almost an implied criticism of Pater in Proust's preface to his translation of *The Bible of Amiens* when he compares the photographs on his desk of the Mona Lisa and the Gilded Virgin of Amiens in her hawthorn bower. The Jocunde, "has one quality and one only - the beauty that belongs to a masterpiece. The photograph close beside it of the Gilded Virgin breathes the melancholy of remem-



A commemorative postcard, showing Ruskin at various stages of his career and the Pensione Calcina in Venice. From John Dixon Hunt's biography, reviewed on this page.

brance". The masterpiece is accomplished, in some sense over: the Virgin of Amiens is part of the texture of life, and it is this vital quality, with all its imperfections and contradictions and passionate prejudices that Proust loved in Ruskin. He writes of Ruskin's failures:

Even if we allow that Ruskin may sometimes have erred as a critic, in the precise value that he attached to any given work, the beauty of his wrong judgment is often more attractive than that of the work judged, and corresponds to that which, though it may be

different from that beauty, is no less precious.

John Unrau makes a similar point in his essay "Ruskin, the Workman, and the Savagery of Gothic", in *New Approaches to Ruskin*, where he exposes Ruskin's almost deliberate misreading of Gothic architecture in pursuit of an imaginative idea of "what all human labour might ideally become". Ruskin's errors, his faults, his contradictions have an authenticity, a close-up quality which is essentially alive. As Mill said of Coleridge, this is a seminal mind from which others can take, and make, as

Proust shaped his great novel under this influence. Ruskin would have wished it so; he wanted above all to be useful. The flaw in his imaginative constitution was that he lacked the final shaping genius which would have enabled him to create and complete. There is no finished masterpiece from his hand. Instead, the immense painstaking record of things seen, noted, learned and retained, sorted, catalogued, semi-transformed by the operation of association, but never quite translated into the ultimate completion of art is what remains. This, which was his tragedy, is paradoxically his attraction. From

the almost inexhaustible quarry of his work there is always something new to be found, something he had seen and plainly told.

It is ironic that the man who understood so much about the working of the human imagination never achieved a masterpiece. Equally ironic that the man who felt that he could not love, or communicate with others, can seem, in his private even more than his public utterances, to speak to us with absolute sincerity. Jeffrey Spear reproduces in *The Ruskin Polygon* the bleak, moving, honest letter Ruskin wrote to Norton on hearing of the death of Norton's wife, of whom he had been passionately jealous, fearing she would separate him from his friend:

My dearest Charles,

What can I say to you - Life and Death - have long been to me as horrible dreams, - both of them. If I thought I could wake out of them I would try to make you think so too - but I think we only cease to dream. Day by day I think of you, and do no more. You know I cared for Susan - Will my saying so be any good to you? I am expecting any day, to hear that Rosie is dead - It would be no good to me though all the world were sorry too...

Do you remember Marie of the Giesbach? Her husband is just dead, and he was all in all to her. And the primroses come out all the same. But I am thankful for them nevertheless.

The frustrated love Ruskin suffered from broke out onto the visible world which he was thankful for, nevertheless, and communicates itself still to those who read him sympathetically. If only for this extraordinary gift, Ruskin deserves Tolstoy's famous tribute, that he was "one of those rare men who think with their hearts".

Four troubled lives

By Peter France

RONALD HINGLEY:
Nightingale Fever
Russian Poets in Revolution
269pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£12.95.
0 297 7902 8

"The Hero as Man of Letters", the class which seemed to Carlyle "altogether a product of these new ages", is by now very familiar. Artists and poets are among our greatest heroes and martyrs. The Soviet Union, that land of heroes



Marina Tsvetaeva

and hero-worship, has a popular series of books called "Lives of Remarkable People" in which writers figure prominently, but not of course the four poets whose stories are told by Ronald Hingley in *Nightingale Fever*, Anna Akhmatova, Boris Pasternak, Osip Mandelstam and Marina Tsvetaeva. Four handsome young faces figure on the cover of the book, faces of men and women doomed to suffering or death by their "nightingale fever", an expression of Mandelstam meaning their inability to stop singing in conditions when singing brought disaster. Irony and levity are not absent from the book, but the four poets are all seen here as tragic heroes.

In 1930 the problem of hero-worship forced itself on Pasternak as he reflected on the suicide of the still young Mayakovsky. He saw in Mayakovsky the danger of the Romantic notion of "biography as spectacle" which he said was characteristic of his time. The idea of the poet who lays himself down as the measure of life, and pays for this with his life, was a powerful one, but it set up a false distinction between the poet and the non-poet, and laid too much stress on the life rather than the poetry. Later on, for all his love of privacy, Pasternak too was driven to a position of self-sacrifice as he took up a defiant public stance over *Doctor Zhivago* - this is the sense of his great poem "Hamlet". But he continued to proclaim that "it is an ugly thing to be famous" and that the poet should "leave blanks in his biography, not his work". And the showman Mayakovsky too prefaced his brief autobiography with the terse statement: "I am a poet. That is what is interesting about me".

To the question: "Why write the lives of poets?" one might then give the simple answer: to improve our reading of their poetry. But it would be a naive answer. Biography, whether of poets or politicians, can be a literary enterprise in its own right, and as such it attracts more true writers than poetry. This is doubly true when the poetry in question is written in a language not understood by most readers of the biography. It is ironic that Nadezhda Mandelstam's splendid memoirs have probably appeared far more to the English-speaking public than her husband's poetry, even though this was their raison d'être.

Such are some of the useful reflections provoked by a reading of Ronald



Osip Mandelstam

appear as the four greatest Russian poets of their time - though this is to ignore the very different Velimir Khelebnikov and in particular the challenging figure of Mayakovsky, whose official apotheosis in the Soviet Union does not take away from his poetic greatness. But a common eminence does not constitute a group. These poets differed greatly in their poetic ideals and their practice, which is after all their main claim on our attention. At times they did indeed say admiring things about one another, but there was often little contact between them and in some cases there was downright hostility.

A further drawback of the "platted" biography is that the treatment can become rather bity. For example, five pages about Mandelstam in 1917 are followed by one on Akhmatova, two on Pasternak and



Boris Pasternak

three on Tsvetaeva; the next chapter is similar, but starts with Tsvetaeva. With this sort of rapid shift it is difficult to evoke any one poet with the inwardness that might be possible within a more continuous narrative. In the later chapters of the book, it is fair to say, there is a greater degree of concentration, particularly on Mandelstam and Tsvetaeva.

The poetry too suffers from this kaleidoscopic approach. A great deal of verse is quoted here, all of it specially translated by the author in a distinctive jagged style, sometimes quite successfully, sometimes (inevitably) less so. Poems and (more usually) extracts follow one another in quick succession, and most of Hingley's comments concern their message or themes, rather than their specific quality as poems. This is not so true of the first prolonged discussion of each poet (for instance the sympathetic pages on Pasternak's early verse in Chapter Three), and later in the book there are good brief accounts of Tsvetaeva's *After Russia* and Mandelstam's poems of the 1930s. On the whole though, as the book proceeds, the poems are increasingly treated as material for a biography, as the verse statement of individuals in particular circumstances.

In some critical biographies of poets the life story gives new meaning to the poetry - one thinks for instance of the illuminating treatment of the "Ode to the West Wind" in Richard Holmes's biography of Shelley. Here it is rather the other way round, the life clearly dominates the poems, and perhaps that is unavoidable in dealing with foreign poets.

Even so, I hope that this readable narrative will inspire readers to go further on their own in the discovery of the actual work which makes Akhmatova, Pasternak, Mandelstam and Tsvetaeva so important.



Anna Akhmatova

Silhouettes by E. Kruglikova, Moscow, 1922.

Reporting on the flood

By Bernard Bergonzi

SHEILA GRANT DUFF:
The Parting of Ways
A Personal Account of the Thirties
223pp. Peter Owen. £10.50.
0 7206 0586 5

Interest in the 1930s continues unabated, whether in the rerunning of myths and familiar images or the arguments provoked by revisionist historians. Sheila Grant Duff provides the simple authenticity of a personal account by someone who was for a few years a close observer of the dramas of the age. She is a product of that network of famous and influential families whose interconnections and intermarriages formed the governing classes of Victorian and Edwardian England. Her paternal and maternal grandfathers were close friends, both Liberal MPs. The former, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, was the lesser figure, whose principal achievement was to become Governor of Madras. The latter was a more conspicuously eminent Victorian; Sir John Lubbock, the first Lord Avebury, a politician who was responsible for the Bank Holiday Act of 1871 which gave working men the statutory right to a holiday; he was also a scientist and a friend of Huxley and Darwin. Sheila Grant Duff is descended from his second marriage to the daughter of General Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, archaeologist and anthropologist. She herself was born in 1913, when the network was on the eve of disintegration: her father, a regular army officer, was killed in action soon after the outbreak of the First World War, and two of her uncles were killed later. It is a commonplace that the 1930s generation were deeply affected by the war that they had been too young to fight in; Sheila Grant Duff, who was too young even to remember her father, grew up determined to do all she could to prevent another war.

She had a happy childhood, particularly when the family were at High

Elms, their rambling country house in Kent, adjoining Darwin's estate near Farnborough; there were holidays in Scotland and, later, with friends in North Cornwall and the Isle of Wight. Sheila Grant Duff writes of her early years with measured nostalgia, sketching in a conventionally idyllic life divided, in the upper-class way, between nursery and grown-up world, of a kind familiar from many English autobiographies and novels. In due course she was presented at Court. But unlike many other girls from similar backgrounds she had inherited a large measure of social idealism from her family, and she was also clever enough to go to Oxford. She went up in 1931 to read PPE and entered a circle of subsequently distinguished acquaintances, some of whom are still alive, and all of whom helped to mould what is recognizably our world, as opposed to the world in which Sheila Grant Duff had been born. She had tutorials in philosophy with R. G. Collingwood, formed an acquaintanceship with Richard Crossman, friendships with Douglas Jay and Isaiah Berlin, and something more than friendship with Goronwy Rees, a dazzlingly brilliant scholarship boy and enfant terrible from a Cardiff grammar school who was elected to All Souls at the same time as the Old Etonian Quintin Hogg. Sheila Grant Duff was on the edge of the self-mythologizing circles in the 1930s (that are now, retrospectively, so familiar, but there was not much of a place for women in them, and her particular combination of idealism and independent-mindedness took her in a different direction).

Under the pressures of the age her inherited liberalism took a leftward turn; she briefly visited Russia, but seems not to have been seriously tempted by Communism, and she was repelled by Goronwy Rees's friend Guy Burgess. Alarmed, like many of her contemporaries, at the rise of Hitler, she determined to become a journalist and tell the truth to English readers about foreign affairs, in the hope of avoiding the disaster of another war. She was young and naive, but she was also

intelligent, determined and energetic, with enough useful connections to give her a foothold in Journalism. She was helped by having a small private income, so that she could serve an apprenticeship by acting as unpaid helper to established foreign correspondents, something which could not happen in the highly unionized profession of today. Her principal mentor was a well-known American journalist, Edgar Ansel Mower, who had sent dramatic reports about the early days of Nazism in Berlin before he was forced to leave. He transferred his base to Paris, where as correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News* he found work for Sheila and gave her a thorough political education in the state of Europe. He is one of the dominant figures in an amiable hero-worshipping book. Others include Goronwy Rees, with whom Sheila was in love for a while (he does not, however, mention her in his own autobiography); Adam von Trott, a young German aristocrat whom she met when he was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, and who was executed in 1944 for his part in the generals' plot against Hitler; and the Czech journalist and democratic politician, Hubert Ripka.

In becoming a foreign correspondent, she had broken with the normal expectations about a girl of her class - and headstrong - however bright. At the same time she had assumed one of the archetypal roles of the age. The newspaper was still the supreme news medium and the reporter was a modern culture hero, attractively presented in popular fiction and films; foreign correspondents were particularly glamorous figures. And Journalism was open to women. The enterprising, wise-cracking, tough but good-hearted girl reporter became a familiar Hollywood type. One of Sheila Grant Duff's first assignments was to report for the *Observer* the Standard plebiscite of 1935, where she encountered triumphant Nazism at close quarters. Back in England she worked for a while as personal assistant to Jawaharlal Nehru when he was in London, then returned to Journalism on the Continent. In 1936 she decided

to base herself in Prague, where there were no resident Western correspondents, and which she rightly saw as a likely centre of international crisis. However, she took time off from there to carry out a secret mission for Mower, by making a brief and potentially dangerous visit to Malaga in Nationalist Spain to get news of the imprisoned Arthur Koestler. Like an earlier British visitor, Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, she saw the between-war republic as a haven of democracy and civilization and she reported German threats to its integrity and independence with growing urgency. But the *Observer* under Garvin was committed to appeasing Hitler and her relations with the paper grew difficult, not least because of the suspicion directed at her in Prague as its correspondent, and finally she resigned. She continued working in Czechoslovakia as a freelance whilst trying to arouse public opinion in England about its fate.

Her extensive network of family connections was useful in this process. Being related to Winston Churchill's wife, she got in touch with him about the Czech situation. Churchill invited the young journalist to lunch and subsequently kept in close touch with her about the Nazi threat to Czechoslovakia. In September 1938 the Czechs were betrayed by the West at the Munich agreement; whatever historians may say about it now, Sheila Grant Duff's account records the intense anguish of a first-hand participant in the crisis and a passionate supporter of the Czech cause. From having been an opponent of war in the early 1930s she had come, like her friend Ripka, to want the strong Czech army to make a stand against the Nazis; it was generally believed that the German generals would remove Hitler rather than fight a war that Germany was not ready for. At the time, there was general satisfaction with the supposed settlement, though it was to last less than a year. As Louis McNeice wrote:

Glory to God for Munich. And stocks go up and weeds

Are saved and politicians' reputations Go up like Jack-on-the-Beanstalk; only the Czechs

Go down and without fighting.

After the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia Sheila Grant Duff did what she could to help her Czech friends. A Penguin Special called *Europe and the Czechs* which she had been commissioned to write earlier in the year came out and sold widely; she remarks, "with bitter irony, it became a best-seller now that the cause it championed was lost". Had it appeared sooner it might have affected public opinion in favour of the Czechs. *The Parting of Ways* ends in 1939. A note on the jacket tells us that, during the war, she worked first for the Foreign Office and then as editor of the BBC Czechoslovak section of the *For the People* radio service. She lived a secluded life, farming with her second husband, first in England and then in Ireland.

Her book is a vivid though not very profound recreation of far-off people and events, by one who early in life was briefly immersed in what Auden called "the dangerous flood of history". It is a memoir of activities rather than an autobiography which is strongly revealing of its subject's personal attitudes and emotions. Sheila Grant Duff conveys her feeling about Czechoslovakia, certainly; but there are other interesting things about which she says very little, such as her dealings with her family and friends over her individualistic course of life. She says just enough about her relationship with Adam von Trott to make one wish for more; he was in love with her, and she was unable to reciprocate the feeling, though she was very fond of him despite political disagreements. He emerges from her book as a tragically tormented figure; anti-Nazi but patriotically German and hurt by her hostility, he saw it, to his country; and devoted, in a few more years, to his wife's death. Her accounts of his touch on feelings that are not apparent elsewhere, but she has preferred not to get out of her depth, and one cannot blame her for that.

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Blinding the bourgeois

By George Gömöri

TAMAS ACZEL:
Illuminations
375pp. Faber. £7.95.
0 571 11827 5

Tamas Aczel has spent the larger part of his life (thirty-five years in all) in his native Hungary; he published his first book of poetry in Hungarian during the Second World War. After it he was both a believing and a practising Communist for many years, writing books slanted in a way that earned him praise from the highest authorities – in 1952 he was awarded the Stalin Prize. It was his rebellion against the Party line and rejection of its double standards that earned him the title of genuine writer in the mid 1950s. An émigré since 1956, Aczel first lived in London, leaving for the United States (where he teaches at the University of Massachusetts) in 1966. *Illuminations* is his first novel written in English.

Given this background, *Illuminations* seems a surprisingly bourgeois novel. Its hero, George Feldheimer, comes from a good Hungarian middle class family: his father is an internationally known Jewish pediatrician decorated in the First World War, his mother an anxiety-ridden and religious Catholic. Feldheimer himself, a refugee dentist-stomatologist, leads a fairly typical cosmopolitan middle-class existence in Hampstead. His reminiscences often evoke the committed interlude when Feldheimer

was still considered a good Party member, was sent to China and other places on official visits and had to worry about the ideological purity of his statements or relationships, but all that belongs firmly to the past. Feldheimer's irony may be laced from time to time with references to "Uncle Karl" and "Josif Vissarionovich" but it is clear that he has lost whatever interest he may have had in politics. The recent past has receded beyond the horizon; not so the more distant past, or the familiar sights of Father and Mother. Feldheimer's happy immersion in the nostalgic, lukewarm bathwater of bourgeois Vienna in the 1960s shows that in fact *that* is the milieu he likes best.

In fact, Feldheimer is in some ways more *Mitteeuropäisch* than Hungarian. The edges of his Hungarian are sufficiently blurred to reassure the reader with no interest in local issues, but they are still audible to those able to grasp his slightly exotic, allusions. Aczel's cultural package includes information on Franz Joseph's sexual habits as well as glib references to Dante (though not to the Austro-Hungarian social police which exists only in the blue-dreamer's imagination), Kretschmer as well as the forgotten terrorist Sylvester Matuska of Blatobágy, General Zhukov's tanks as well as *Grenadiermarsch* (an improvised dish, not a military march). This in itself would not matter: *Darkness at Noon* takes place in Russia, and more than one of Graham Greene's novels in the Caribbean, yet they are easily understandable to most English readers. The problem, rather, is that Aczel builds

up his main character in such a way that his past appears to be infinitely richer and more exciting than his present or, as we may conclude when we finish the novel, his future ever will be. Yet *Illuminations* is definitely not a political novel.

Is it, then, a novel of adventure, perhaps? It certainly pretends to be that, without any real success. The main plot – George Feldheimer losing his eyesight in a traffic accident in Hampstead and regaining it for a short time only to lose it again, which is in a sense Feldheimer chasing his eyesight and his happiness – is slow to gather momentum, and once the author has made his protagonist blind, he is not quite sure what to do with him next. He transports him to Vienna in anticipation of a near-miraculous operation by a famous eye-specialist only to destroy this hope one chapter later. The specialist, Dr. Abellin, is murdered in mysterious circumstances. Why? By whom? We are never to know. Another shallow mystery is Livia's disappearance. She is Feldheimer's much-suffering, plump lady friend who seems to play a fairly important part in the plot until she suddenly slips away, "never to come back again". And is there any point in inserting between two sessions of Viennese coffee-drinking and brioche-eating the truly horrifying story of Ravallac's torture and slow execution, which took place in 1610? I suspect that Aczel did not quite know how to handle his own material.

If the story lacks coherence, the style at times strikes one as a curious mixture of Central European cultural cliché and a far too idiosyncratic English vocabulary. When the author refers for the fifth time to his (thirty-nine-year-old) hero's "young, woe-borne heart" it is enough to make one squirm. In fact, *Illuminations* is most readable in those parts where a novelette is inserted into the uneven flow of the narrative – these stories have a stabilizing, soothing effect on the mind even when they relate events at such grim places as Mauthausen or Zhigansk in Siberia. Perhaps Aczel's talents are more suited to short, conventional stories than to the longish and complex novel which pretends to use all the up-to-date techniques of contemporary fiction.

rarely does he provide, for example, the incidental graces, the small marks of future shock, that are one of the principal delights of the genre – as when one of his characters, too tired to walk a few flights of stairs, pays the elevator surcharge instead.

When Shaw's stories rely on contrivance rather than exploiting it, they gain from neither the possibilities of one genre nor the rules of another. "Dream Fight", for instance, cannot revive a predictable tale about a has-been fighter and his young rival merely by making them telepathic who contend for the projected murder, when the only suspect returns from outer space. His accuser is dead, the corpse has never been found, witnesses have forgotten details, but the memory is fresh for the suspect, who owing to the effects of relativity is only thirteen months older than when he left.

The same shrewdness about conventions invigorates the ghost story in "The Cottage of Eternity", where a mad scientist's speculations about ghosts and particle physics lead him to murder. In these stories Shaw understands the essential absurdity of science fiction – how its apparently limitless possibilities have been slavishly restricted by adolescent fantasies of power and personal triumph. Shaw's solution has been to exploit the restraints of his form.

That such a colour is not always successful is shown by the stories here that are flawed by elementary transgressions of narrative. A horror story, "Conversion", about an alien creature emerging from a teleported device, fails to develop the crucial link between the working-class hero and his lover, an engineer. Seeking to stifle by beginning with her death, it cannot establish the emotional necessary for the story's real horror – her return from the dead. Similarly, a *deux ex machina*, though a very rare one, spoils "Aimph theatre".

A *Better Mantrap* is Shaw's eighth book of science fiction, and his third collection of stories. Though he has written a number of interesting novels, including *Night Walk* and *Orbitville* and a least one or two short stories, *Outer Days*, *Other* is a novel in the recent work best of Shaw's style, and seems unwilling to risk a new one.

Genre feeding on genre is an amusement, not an advance. Though none of these new stories matches the nerve of his science-fiction western ("Skirmish on a Summer Morning") or his detective tale about a private pal ("The Giacomina Caplan on the gothic, the sea yam, or on myth, here, however, he is caught in a played-out style, and seems unwilling to risk a new one.

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Tropic of tongues

By James Kirkup

JEAN METELLUS:
Jamel au crépuscule
254pp. Paris: Gallimard. Fr 37.50.

With a few notable exceptions, the best African and Caribbean literature now seems to be written not in English, but in French, and, to a lesser extent, in Spanish and Portuguese. Francophone and lusophone novelists and poets of Africa and the Caribbean can be said to form a school of original and professional writers the like of which cannot be found among those whose language is English. Francophone poets and novelists in particular display an originality and sensitivity that spring from the language itself, which they often manipulate in subtle new ways to create what is virtually experimental French, successfully combining classical rigour and the exotic exuberance of native vocabulary, idioms and proverbs.

Jean Metellus, a practising neurologist, is one of these authors. It was as a highly articulate and hallucinating poet that he began his writing career a few years ago with *Au Pirelle chantant*, an admirable first collection whose eclectic themes and unique, organic French style, both playful and passionate, seemed to put him far above the present rather drab native French word-spinners.

Jamel au crépuscule is Metellus's first novel. Jamel is the name of the town in Haiti where the author was born, and like many first novels it is largely autobiographical. It exhibits all the rapturous and generous style of his poetry, in a dazzling Haitian variety of Rabelaisian French. The prose rushes along with a tropical abundance of violent, startling imagery and gorgeous vocabulary, as the language enthusiastically incorporates native words and speech rhythms. The effect is rather like a Douanier Rousseau painting come to disturbing life.

There is a large and sometimes bewildering cast of eccentric and memorable characters, including two pairs of twins – the influence of Michel Tournier's *Les Méduses*, first

published in 1975, has perhaps made itself felt here. The dialogues are voluble, funny and fantastic, with their own peculiar brand of logical illogicality. The two chief characters are the ever-youthful, ever-questioning Candide-like hero, Pisquette, and his delightful former mistress, Gros Nina. The events take place in 1956, and so the novel can almost be regarded as a historical tale or burlesque, lyric chronicle of life in Latin America. It is also an acute study of the moral, social and economic situation that has gone on deteriorating through bloody tragedy, decadent authority and political corruption, to the wretched present-day state of this beautiful island and its even more attractive inhabitants. The old colonial influences are still remembered with bitterness and a keen satirical eye.

Haitians, with their resilient gaiety and vigorous individuality, have always shown great courage, adaptability and resourcefulness in the face of adversity, and never more so than today, in their country's desperate and tragic confusion. Throughout this illuminating novel, we see people struggling to remain faithful to their roots, to their ancient voodoo gods, and to that extraordinary Haitian tongue which in itself seems to give them all the gift of tongues, and a richness of humour, passion and poetry inform their attempts. The novel ripples along from one tragicomic scene to another, and the author's irrepressible native spirit ensures that, unlike many modern British picaresque novels, it does not run out of steam halfway through: we are held to the very end by the extraordinary characters and their brilliant, never-failing gift of the gab.

First published in 1934, *L'Africain Fantôme* by Michel Leiris has recently been reissued (Editions Gallimard, 536pp). It is the journal written by M. Leiris during a voyage through Africa in 1930 which he joined at the invitation of the ethnographer Marcel Griaule; the publishers comment that "le carnet de Michel Leiris glisse vite vers le 'Journal intime' comme s'il était assés de soi que, s'il se borne à des notations extérieures et se fait sur ce qu'il est lui-même, l'observateur fausse le jeu".

TIM HEALD:
Masterstroke
168pp. Hutchinson. £6.95.
0 09 146760 8

Simon Bognor, Tim Heald's bungling Board of Trade Inspector, is sent down to Oxford to investigate the murder of the Master of his former College. Half-pickled as usual, Bognor picks a clumsy path between the amoral businessmen, homosexual school-teachers and Oxford's answer to the Cambridge Burgess, Maclean and Philby set. Amusing and effective, with some neat touches – a trifle sentimental about Oxford, and more than a trifle out-of-date about its traffic system: no motor-bicycle, not even one ridden by a beautiful English don in designer jeans and thigh-high leather boots, can speed unimpeded down the Cornmarket.

LAWRENCE BLOCK:
The Burglar Who Liked To Quote Kipling
196pp. Robert Hale. £6.50.
0 7091 8746 7

Former burglar Bernie Rhodenbarr now runs a second-hand bookshop on East 11th Street between Broadway and University Place. To oblige a client with a yen for a rare edition of Kipling, he foolishly comes out of retirement to find himself caught up in an affair of more than oriental complexity. Bernie is a nice guy to have around: his narration is as fluent as his lock-picking, and his wit is *excellent*. New York. An amusing, well-put-together story, based on an unusual idea.

T. J. Blayton

Notes for a broken consort

By Galen Strawson

JACQUELINE SIMMS:
Unsolicited Gift
151pp. Chatto and Windus. £6.95.
0 7011 2616 7

Michael married his sister Fleur, reading out the right bits from the Book of Common Prayer. She was eight and he was eleven, and the consummation of the marriage, in their grandfather's dusty laboratory, was a most serious make-believe, solemn and fully clothed. The idea was Fleur's. How were they to keep all their grandparents' possessions in the family? What better way than for them to marry and make a mutual will, each leaving to the other the things the other most wanted?

When Michael was fifteen and Fleur was twelve, she said it was time that they "took the next step". She undressed, and smiled, and Michael "lay heavily on her; and Fleur, who had always been brave as a little girl, cried". Later that year Michael set up an experiment in the laboratory, working from his grandfather's notebooks, and Fleur, entering unexpectedly as he retired to watch, was killed in the explosion. Michael proceeded to a double and successful career in science and music.

At thirty he had a daughter, Sumi.

by his Japanese wife Kikuyo, whom in the crisis of their courtship he could not distinguish from Fleur. "I am not Fleur", said Kikuyo inoue throughout that night.

But Fleur was not forgotten. Sumi's birth seemed to Michael "a resurrection from the dead". In early adolescence Sumi found Fleur's memoirs. And when Michael was forty-five, and Sumi in turn was fifteen, she undressed and stood before him, and they went together to her room. These are the mathematics of Michael's fate; and Michael is not entirely likeable; but Jacqueline Simms's book has a happy ending, when he turns fifty in the spring of 1985.

Unsolicited Gift is a remarkable, finely cadenced first novel. The main body of it is written – not just narrated – by Michael himself; and his authorial musings on what he writes are among Simms's few errors of judgment. But interpolated into his text are "The Memoirs of Miss Fleur . . . by Herself, in her Thirtieth Year"; a children's story by Kikuyo, "Scenes of Childhood", which follows Schumann's *Kinder-scenen* in its titled sections as it shifts into the surreal: "Notes from Sumi"; and "A Broken Consort" in which Michael and Kikuyo, suffering the "slow elapse" of their marriage, speak in turn like the characters in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. (A whole consort, in old musical terminology, is one in which all the instru-

ments are of the same kind, strung or wind; a broken consort is one in which this is not so.)

It is not only in her structural devices that Jacqueline Simms reveals her musicality. Some of Sumi's "Notes" – fragments of diaries, letters not for sending, written to her Papa – are notes about notes: "The best way for me to represent my past year to you would be simply to play a scale: Dum-de-de De-de-de-de Dum." Fleur was destined to be a musician; Michael, for all his "desperately well-intentioned passivity", is as successful as a player of the cello and viola da gamba as he is as a scientist (in which latter capacity he contributes like his grandfather to mankind's instruments of destruction); Kikuyo is a violinist, but becomes a highly successful writer for children; Sumi, a pianist like Fleur, wins a Premier Prix at the Paris Conservatoire; and the novel ends during her accomplished debut in the Salle Gaveau.

So much success – with so little sense of struggle; mere talent, proceeding to its rewards. It is partly by their easy devotion to fruitful vocations that Michael and Kikuyo are distanced from each other – and from us. But this is not the only source of distance: there is something cold in their devotedly inward, dispassionate, stylish self-analysis. Kikuyo, consulting the dictionary, judges Michael to be sweet in the finest senses of the word, and we

must believe her; but there is something unattractively inert in his careful hedonism, his deep, detached, defensive egotism. The two of them are married, for all their *finesse*. It is Sumi who promises the human success.

Unsolicited Gift seems slightly too long, although it is short. But it is an admirable, delicate work. Michael's tale suffers occasionally from factual

Parlance Review (1982 – Volume XLIX Number 1; 158pp) contains fiction by Joyce Carol Oates ("Our Walls") and two stories by Arno Schmidt, "Tall Grete" ("Die Lange Grete") and "Great Cain" ("Grosser Cain"), translated by John Woods. There is also an article on "Arno Schmidt: 1932-1979" by Friedrich P. Ott; other articles include one on contemporary Hebrew literature, by Amos Oz; "Talking with Jose

Donoso", by Ronald Christ; "The Right to Read", by Igor Pomerantz; "Jean Rhys", by Linda Bamber; "Freud's Case Studies", by Carl Pletsch; and an interview conducted with Jan Kavan on dissidence in Czechoslovakia. Also published are reviews of Anarion Appelfeld's *Badenheim 1939*, D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel*, Samuel Beckett's *Company* and William S. Burroughs's *Cities of the Red Night*.

Heights of fancy

By Michael Hofmann

LYNNE SHARON SCHWARTZ:
Balancing Acts
153pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0 575 03086 0

Lynne Sharon Schwartz's second novel strikes one as being something of a balancing act itself, so fraught is it with perils and improbabilities. One is even tempted to identify the tiny figure on the cover with the author – wandering along a high-wire over the twin abysses of pulp fiction and schmaltzy children's literature, passing and re-passing the colossal age-gap of sixty years between her two main characters. It is as though Ms Schwartz had written this novel in response to a dare, the necessity for a confident and believable performance from her is so strong.

Balancing Acts describes, in alternating chapters, the separate but meshing lives of these two main figures over a period of about a year. At seventy-four, Max Fried is a widower and former circus acrobat, a crusty and difficult old man who drinks, smokes cigars before breakfast, and is clearly intent on going into that last goodnight with a maximum of clutter. His opposite number, the female lead, is Alison Markman, a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl, whose puberty, like Max's high old age, is a dramatic period of transition. Astonishingly, given her boring upbringing in Westchester, in the heart of American suburbia, she declares herself to be "verbally precocious", and is a closet, or rather, a mattress novelist, working on the picaresque adventures of Alice, a kind of alter ego. A thoroughgoing non-conformist, like Max, Alison will have nothing to do with the dull opiate of boys, and instead concentrates on her longing for freedom and her developing sense of herself.

The book opens with the two of them in their respective institutions: Max is at Pleasure Knolls (sic) after suffering a heart-attack when he is mugged in New York; Alison is at school. It is their obstinacy that brings them together: when Max takes on some circus-related gymnastics, in which the girl sees the promise of a wider, anarchic freedom. Rather pleasingly, however, they are not to be involved in any

She hitches to San Francisco, where she buys a one-way ticket for a ship sailing to the Orient. And there the story ended, as Alice, one-armed, gazing at the turbulent sea with her long blond hair whipping behind her in the wind, embarks on a new life far away, free and possibly pregnant.

The truth is less glamorous. Alison is apprehended at Port Station, making a break for it after being turned down by the circus. It is understood that she will settle back into family life with her incompensable parents and a new little brother. Max dies after a further heart-attack while dreaming of making love to his dead wife, his death indirectly occasioned by Alison's flight. Before this, however, he manages a last fling with his next-door neighbour, a former chorus girl; an immensely popular sexual act, in which he will no doubt receive the silent encouragement of everyone who reads this book.

This type of reaction is the key to the novel's limitations. There is no evil in *Balancing Acts*, and even death, as we have seen, has no dominion. The absorption of Max and Alison into the waiting communities of the dead and the adult is perhaps a little too inevitable, lending an air of blandness to what is in all other respects a sympathetic and polished book.

In lost man's country

By Christopher Hope

RANDOLPH STOW:
To the Islands
126pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.
0 436 49732 8

It is now almost a quarter of a century since the young Randolph Stow (just twenty-two at the time) published his remarkable novel of Stephen Heriot's penitential passage through the Australian wilderness. The old patriarch's spiritual adventures had as their background what the author described, in a note to the 1958 edition of *To the Islands*, as an "isolated, but fairly progressive mission" of the type he saw to be in danger of disappearing. Stow's aim at the time was to provide some idea of the "positive contribution" the Anglican missions were making to "native welfare".

Such mission stations in the remote northern reaches of Australia and the Aboriginal communities they once supported have now gone, and no one would talk of making contributions to native welfare without first indemnifying themselves with an ironic smile. Accordingly, Stow has re-examined his position, and in the preface to this revised version of the novel he briskly confesses that in the original book he was quite deliberately "making propaganda on behalf of the Christian mission-stations for 'Aborigines', a crusade which he admits failed long ago. Yet something of the old crusading zeal clearly lingers, and the new preface note is forthright in its condemnation of the decision to close the mission sta-

tions. The predictable results of the resettlement of the mission-dependent Aborigines near hostile white towns, Stow records with commendable perfunctoryness, have been "drink, prostitution, violence and go!" Recent attempts to reverse the process and return to the mission territories have not been particularly successful, with relations between black and white deteriorating sharply, and Stow roundly condemns the Anglican church for its lack of vision in jettisoning its cargo of dependants.

The extinction of his hopes for the mission stations have led Stow to make a number of small but significant revisions. Cut to the bone in the new edition is the love-affair readers of the original will remember unfolding between the nurse Helen Bond and the good-hearted Terry Dixon (a false challenge from the idealistic Bob Gunn). Gone too are those conversations in which Stow had his characters support the role of the mission stations or put the opposing view that the station inevitably became a "sort of native town" and that its inhabitants, sadly, felt encouraged to be "cheeky" towards their white betters. Also edited is his account of the dilemma of the Church, characteristically engaged in trying to square the circle, looking increasingly to the resettlement of its Aboriginal charges in or near the white towns as a proper liberal response and a rather useful solution to the practical problem of getting them to work for a living instead of "sponging" on the missions, as the "progressive" priest, Father Wey, was made to express it in the original.

It must be said that Stow's revisions everywhere strengthen the

novel. They are made with point and precision, and the stripping away of redundant material serves to put the emphasis where it belongs, on the towering figure of Stephen Heriot, the pitiful, prodigious, raging old man led by the Aborigine Justin on his last great journey through the "lost man's country" of the North Kimberley, making his spiritual odyssey away from Anglican pieties towards a troubled but authentic redemption. The ambition revealed in Stow's choice of a Lear-like theme, and his success in achieving a dramatic portrayal of the old mission boss – a man of the old days, of the stockwhip and punishment book, now obliged painfully to lose and then redeem himself in a land he thought he dominated – is all the more astonishing when one recalls the author's age when he wrote *To the Islands*. The revisions of the other, older Stow underline the power of the original, which neither the rather artificial mission talk nor the taste for somewhat florid poetisms really interfered with. Stow's changes show it clearly to be a provocative meditation on relations between the races, and his presentation leaves little doubt that in Australia they have frequently been conducted in such a way as to make even a South African blush.

Heriot is the measure, embracing his dependence, accepting the gifts the Aborigines are forbidden to make the white man, the gifts of their kindness and their pity; he is guided by an Aborigine, fed by an Aborigine, asks forgiveness of an Aborigine and dies before an Aborigine god. In this honed-down version of *To the Islands* Randolph Stow's challenge seems sharper than ever.

Wingatui

Sit in the car with the headlights off. Look out there now where the yellow moon floats like across the birdcage. You might have touched that sky you lost. You might have split that azure violin in two.

Bill Manhire

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By Roger Garfitt

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The Apple-Broadcast
and other new poems
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0 7100 0985 2 (cassette)

If Peter Redgrove were not a visionary poet, if it were not part of his work's ambition to be self-effacing, it would be possible to admire him as a stylist. As it is, there is scarcely time. It is not just that the surfaces of his language are as transparent as the surfaces of his world, continually opening into other realms: more than this, his language is kinetic, and one effect is consumed in creating the next.

For example, this moment from "Le Cabaret Blanc" is just one from a long sequence of images:

Now, outside, gazing through the quick-
set stars
Thorn-hunched in the smokeless air
Is like looking through God's watch,
Through all the wheels with diamond
teeth;

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Many poets would be happy to end with lines as good as "the quickest stars" Thorn-hunched in the smokeless air". Here it seems inappropriate even to stop and savour them. Redgrove has already swept us on to the image of God's watch, for which he has prepared us earlier in the poem, so that it comes more naturally than the excerpt may suggest. And yet that glimpse of the stars is crucial to the imagination's ascent (and ascent) to the idea of God's watch. The image's power, in other words, is fully evoked only to be immediately expended in driving the poem forward.

This happens time and again in Redgrove. We tend to think of imagery and rhetoric as opposing poetic strategies, and to regard one as sincere and the other as suspect. In Redgrove that opposition vanishes. He invigilates us step by step, image by image, each so instantly persuasive that it amounts to a small rhetorical coup, towards a vision of the universe that we would never have accepted at the outset.

Such coups are successful only because Redgrove is a poet of great linguistic resources. Where many poets cultivate one particular area of the language, he has a Shakespearean breadth of vocabulary, drawing on Anglo-Saxon roots for his thorn-hunched stars and on Latin roots for his description of a river, "Like one long unbroken room of sequent chambers / Sliding through each other". That is a phrase of Shakespearean grandeur; and yet the eloquence, like Shakespeare's, is almost incidental. What matters is the thought, the continuing discrimination and redefinition that in the next phrase places those "sequent chambers" / Sliding through each other" as "pulses" Echoed from the rainy source".

Redgrove's early training as a scientific journalist, clearly still of value to him, is capped by his gift for humorous invention, beautifully in evidence in the opening lines of "At the Street Party":

Water makes her way, accustomed
Into all places, through mire as an 'eel,
Through the air as a hawk,
She gets past the obliteration of forms
Because she is the transformer,
Gets past clothed in food-chains.

Bucked into such supple, stretchy
satchels
Revelation luggage as you.

The range of those lines, from ballad language to the language of the biochemist, is extraordinary; but their charm goes beyond command of varying idioms. There is a relaxed, improvisatory quality about the development from wisp-satchels to "such expanding / Revelation luggage as you". This willingness to be homo ludens in order to become homo sapiens is central to Redgrove's method. He follows an idea to see where it will go, and his exposition becomes a shared adventure.

But exposition, even of this quality, can take one only so far. It is by transposition that Redgrove achieves his most important effects. His habit of reworking material allows us to watch this process in action. An image will appear in one poem in its original, anecdotal form - fresh from the notebook - while in another poem, often printed before the "original", it will appear transposed into quite another, imaginative order. Thus the title poem, which is printed last in the book, includes the phrase "the stiff dry arrow-grass". In "Le Cabaret Blanc", printed earlier in the book, that simple observation has become "There are toms / Pierced with long grass as though their doors / Were shot through with radiant flights of arrows". One mode seems to underwrite the other, the precision of the observation carrying over into the clarity and certainty of the vision.

A similar transposition occurs in Redgrove's use of his key words, "atom" and "spirit". Often, as in "Le Cabaret Blanc", one section of the sequence is called "Atom", "ghost" is almost a scientific term, Redgrove's word for the outcome of

a process, every stage of which we can follow:

The fountain's rigid path.
An iron motor hammers in an oily box.
Water sledge-hammered through stiff
pipes.
Water shocked into ghosts through an
iron lit
In a concrete basin, like a wine of
light.

Electric-powered: its ghost-heart
In the generating-stations
Is a fountain of current a county away.
Ghost driving ghost through the wires
like cool pipes

And behind this blue ghost a black one
stands
Black with millennia of sunlight which it
gives up
Moving and yelling in the power-house
fires

"Streets of the Spirits" starts at that level, with an evocation of the wind in the trees: "air-horses that bound / From tree-crowned hill to copse, / Printing hoofmarks that heal again". At the end of the poem the subject is still the wind in the trees - but the wind as revealed in its sacred aspect:

I think of the air like an immense cope
Of silky glass stirred by the valiant
trees,
Like welded ghost, or a bell ringing
That rumbles and unrumpled with its
notes,

The spirits the music of the trees
Beating like the clappers of a world-
bell,
By a command of their deeply-interlinked
rooms
With their chases beating world-music
into everything.

"Cope" signals a heightening of implication, so that by the time we come to "ghost", the word has a dual resonance. On one level, it is still the outcome of a process, "welded" by the wind's movement on the other level, it is revealed as a sacramental presence, "the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace". The two levels fuse in the image of "world-music", in which process becomes celebration.

It is in this fusion of the scientific and the religious that Redgrove's poetry has most to offer; but it is this very fusion that is likely to pose most problems for his readers. How complete can the fusion be? How equal a relationship does Redgrove allow between the two modes of thought? Is he using scientific evidence to put over what is at heart a religious belief? Or is he using religious language, with all its richness of association, to give an extra resonance to what is strictly a scientific account?

Redgrove himself would probably not even accept the distinction on which these questions are based. As he said in an interview given to the *Hudson Review* in 1976,

The visions are visions of matter. I'm a materialist, you see, but I'm a materialist in the Hindu tradition, which regards matter as a song. This is not so far from contemporary physics, of course. What we're made of is a complex vibration... The shaman is not a man who doubts (this is a mistake made in later Greek thought); he is a man who separates his mind from his body and goes into the universe and flies away like an

angel, as Blake knew very well... He's a man that goes into the universe of his body, and in the universe of the body all the forces that make us are compiled. That is, we are a focus of many many forces in the world.

That seems sensible enough. To say that "matter sings" is to hold both sides in balance. But the word "shaman" alerts us to another difficulty.

As I have argued elsewhere, there is a sense in which all poetry is a recovery of the ancient magical view of the universe. Set against twentieth-century alienation, such a recovery becomes particularly poignant. Who would not be humbled by contact with an ancient people who live, as Tom Lowenstein has written of the Alaskan Eskimos, "in a full universe, whose precise components - physical, spiritual and historical - must all be in the power of active human contact and recall", for whom the act of song-making is "a process by which the mind tunes itself in to an articulate universe"? The influence of shaman song on such poets as Ted Hughes and Peter Redgrove is obviously crucial to the remaking of our poetry. But that influence should result in an ancient vision finding new expression in contemporary form, not in a wholesale importation of the paraphernalia of past cultures.

There is very little "scholarly pedantic baggage" in Hughes; but with Redgrove, perhaps because he is didactic by nature, it is sometimes possible to feel that his research material too easily becomes the matter of his poetry. To learn from animism in order to recover a sense of the sacred is one thing; but to wish to re-enter the animistic universe of "The Turning Stars" is another:

We sneak covering past the tree-trunks,
For the star of honey and wine is a
rivet
And the stud of Influence that causes
"tu,
We should not let its light glide into an
open pupil.

Any of these stars could switch our
luck,

There are two more related problems here. The first is Redgrove's opportunism in selecting on whatever might serve as a vehicle for his imagination. One of his finest poems, the poem actually called "Superstition" in *The Weddings at Nether Powers*, takes off from just the kind of superstitious jumble that I would want to question. The other problem is that orthodoxes always distort the heterodoxes they suppress. As Ted Hughes wrote in his review of Max Nicholson's *The Environmental Revolution*:

The idea of nature as a single organism is not new. It was man's first great thought, the basic intuition of most primitive theologies. Since Christianity hardened into Protestantism, we can follow its underground heretical life, leagued with everything occult, spiritualistic, devilish, over-emotional, bestial, mystical, feminine, crazy, revolutionary, and poetic.

An unsympathetic critic might well remark that "everything occult, spiritualistic, devilish" and so on seems a fair summary of Redgrove's preoccupations in recent years. But, unless he were purblind as well as unsympathetic, he would have to admit that these preoccupations have led to "man's first great thought".

One only has to compare *The Force* (1966) with the collections since then to realize how much Redgrove's work needed that dual resonance which occurs when the scientific sense of "ghost" shades into the sacred. Many of the poems in *The Force* are celebrations of process in entirely natural terms: but the celebration seems over-insistent, the language over-muscular. There is a sense of the poet "fighting to pull the sun down / That may not come, Peter." For all their energy, these poems seem two-dimensional compared with others in *The Force* that look forward to Redgrove's recent work, poems such as "The Case", a long imaginative fiction that considers man, in the words of the epigraph from Hesse, as "an experient and a transition... the narrow and perilous bridge between nature and spirit".

That development through imaginative fiction has proved important. Redgrove is essentially a storyteller, in his poems as much as in his novels, and most quibbles about his subject-matter dissolve if he is read as we would read a folk-tale or a fairy-tale. In this respect, the simultaneous publication of a cassette of Redgrove reading twenty-two of the poems from *The Apple-Broadcast* is a welcome innovation. Listening is a different mode of attention to that of reading, an older mode that goes back to childhood and back into prehistory. It is probably the right mode through which to approach a poet like Redgrove, who believes that he should not "cling to the scripture" but "improvise with spirit".

Improvisation, in fact, is also central to Redgrove's purpose. In "Song" he imagines himself in a pub, chucking his Bible in the parlor fire. The other drinkers glow.

Then all at once
With a gesture identical and simultaneous
Of reaching through the coat right into
the heart
They all bring out their breast-pocket
bibles
Like leather coats and pile them in the
fire
And as they burn the men begin to
sing

But already, even as the song is rising on the air, Redgrove observes that: "one man does not sing / I notice him / As my song takes me with the others. He is / Setting down with the words in rapid shorthand / In a small fat pocketbook with gilded edges." Redgrove is a Pentecostal, always trying to liberate the song from those small fat pocketbooks.

Another image that recurs constantly in *The Apple-Broadcast* is that of new-baked bread. Bread is a simple necessity, the bread of life; but it will not keep and it cannot be eaten once and for all. It depends on the living action of the yeast, and it has to be baked and eaten fresh every day. In this, Redgrove finds a metaphor for his own activity as a poet; and in "The Medium Will Not Broadcast" he can perhaps find a metaphor for the way he would like his poetry to be read:

But while he does his trance-work the house is a beautiful bread,
Under its tough roof of crust; entirely
one
Beautiful, atmosphere of new-baked
bread
White and fluffy, that when he stops
Quickly grows stale and must be eaten
up;
I see the spirits at our table eating (trance-
bread
Full of zeaty yeasts, loopholes and full
Broadcasting House continues to broadcast
ghosts
But we turn away from those into our
chain and circle
Of spirit: sitting next to person, spirit,
person

The Son of the King of the Moy

after the Irish

Met this child on the Roxborough
Estate. Nolesse, she said; Nolesse
Obliged. And his tiny nipples
Were bruise-blush, wild raspberries.

Paul Muldoon

Originating organisms

By Stephen Clark

RUPERT SHELDRAKE:
A New Science of Life:
The Hypothesis of Formative Causation
229pp. Blond and Briggs. £12.50.
0 85334 115 0

A book which an editor of *Nature* would like to burn (pp245-6; September 24, 1981), and the *New Scientist* as vigorously defends (June 18, 1981, October 1, 1981) is unlikely to be dull. Rupert Sheldrake's book, and his hypothesis, do not disappoint expectations. A former fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, currently a Consultant Plant Physiologist in Hyderabad, he is part of an honourable tradition. Many scientists and philosophers have had doubts about the adequacy of current "reductionist materialism" to describe or account for the universe, particularly the living world, and most particularly the human mind. Dr Sheldrake acknowledges his debt to many, especially to the group of "Epiphany" philosophers at Cambridge, who have been working out of the mainstream of professional philosophy. *Nature's* contempt for his work is contempt for a whole, lively tradition of puzzlement and creative thought.

Reductionist materialism is the doctrine that everything is to be explained as the outcome of the motions of elementary particles, in simple accord with known laws of physics. Mind and Life are only complex kinetic processes. "In practice," Sheldrake observes, "the mechanistic theory is not treated as a rigorously defined, refutable scientific theory; rather it serves to provide a justification for the conservative method of working within the established framework of thought." If the known laws of physics are enough to explain the growth, self-healing and behaviour of living organisms then biologists ought (in principle) to be able to calculate the future state of a fertilized egg solely from a knowledge of DNA bases and its biochemical condition. That no such prediction can be made can always be blamed on the complexity of the problem; but in that case we have no way of telling whether the theory makes correct predictions or not. Mechanistic is an idealistic programme, not a definitively established theory. Too often jargon is substituted for sound hypothesis, as if we understand biology better by using metaphors from Information Theory or computer science.

But why be troubled? Mechanistic works: by assuming that biological events are the surface of molecular events which are broadly calculable we have learnt the code of terrestrial life, even if we do not (yet) know quite how it is decoded. By assuming that psychological events are the surface of biochemical, neurophysiological events we have learnt to control moods and black depressions, even if we have no "deep" understanding of the mind and its phenomena. Why is it that serious thinkers perpetually seek to resurrect older modes of understanding; mysterious forces; that a sinister religiosity lies behind it; or romantic disenchantment with the modern world (as if any earlier world was happier). Such an explanation is of course only a stop-gap: strictly to explain an intellectual habit it would be necessary to know the biochemistry of neurosis and the chemical pathways which lead from DNA to adult neuroticism, and the laws of physics which determine how exactly "elementary particles" cohere. And when we have done that we shall have to explain also how it is that other well-endowed intelligences (like the editor of *Nature*) can think differently. Or rather, "can behave" as if they thought (which, strictly, they do not: "electrical impulses pass down the lines of least resistance").

There, of course, is the rub. To explain anything is to assume that genuine understanding is possible, that there are laws of logic and rules of scientific method, and dedicated investigators, and interested audience: none of these are just the same as the laws of physics, or the motions of elementary particles. An electrical discharge, as such, is not the sort of thing that can be either true or false. Reductionist materialism always was absurd, even if some other form of materialism turns out to be true (a point on which Sheldrake offers no definite judgment, though one may have one's suspicions). Even professed mechanists in fact always use explanations, concepts, theories of a higher level than the elementary, even if they profess to consider these as stop-gaps. We cannot in practice grasp the world we seek to explain without using such notions as System, Order, Organism, Goal and Truth. It is a commonplace that the universe turns out to be a complex of ordered wholes, nested each within another. We explain the behaviour of wholes by the laws appropriate to their own level, even if we claim to want an explanation in terms of their constituent parts. We cannot now predict, and have no non-metaphysical reason to suppose that we ever will be able to predict, what new properties will emerge from some hitherto unexamined combination.

If mechanistic is an unrealized programme pursued with the vigour of a holy war by those with some metaphysical bias, and liable to degenerate into gibberish if it is applied also to the laws of intellect, the way is open to consider some alternative. Should we treat living organisms as entirely other than the non-living, controlled by entelechies of the kind Hans Driesch made infamous? Dualism should not be a dirty word; it is, for instance, almost impossible to shake the Cartesian conviction that Thought and Matter are eternally distinct (from which it follows, unless thought is purely epiphenomenal, and correspondingly incomprehensible, that the physical universe is not a closed system), but scientists are nervous of dualism at any other level. It is part of the scientific programme that there are no radical discontinuities in nature. So some version of organismism is preferable, finding systems and principles of order in non-living as well as living things. Living things are regulated in their growth, their healing, their motions by systems which in effect choose among the possibilities made available by their constituents. Biological events are not wholly determined by the motions of elementary particles, for that Laplacean dream has long been abandoned; but they are not therefore merely "chance" events. What happens is selected by the "morphogenetic field" or "chreode" (Waddington's term) associated with the organism.

So far, such a field is no more than a reworking of older ideas of Systemic Wholeness. It is admittedly an ill-defined idea, postulated solely to explain certain facts of life and crystals: we have no alternative way of observing such fields, and they are by hypothesis of a different kind from "energetic" fields (gravity or electro-magnetism), whose mechanical relationships we can discover or deduce. But something like this is true of every idea in its inception: we have now discovered "genes" to be embodied as pieces of DNA, but they were once only theoretical constructs, mathematical devices. It is not wholly impossible that we should devise other ways of detecting Sheldrake's fields, but much of the reason for postulating them will always be theoretical convenience. They, or their equivalents, will appear in scientific journals if they are helpful to our understanding, and suggest new approaches to the world.

This is Sheldrake's major contribution. He proposes that such fields can influence each other, that they come into being by "morpho-resonance". When a new organic crystallized, "on the first occasion it may not crystallize at all; but on subsequent occasions crystallization should occur more and more easily as increasing numbers of past crystals contribute to its morpho-field by morpho-resonance". Sheldrake suggests that this is borne out in practice, and his theory could be checked against the conventional

alternative (that solutions are infected with seeds of the new crystal carried in the air) by simple control experiments. He proposes further ingenious tests to discover whether a new substance could be induced to form crystals first of one type and then of another, securing the future monopoly of the second by mass-producing them. Such an event, if it occurred under controlled conditions, would be incomprehensible by standard theories and lend some support to the theory of "morpho-resonance" or "formative causation".

The most grotesque of Sheldrake's proposed experiments is to check whether rats in one laboratory would learn a trick more readily if many rats elsewhere were trained to do it. On the theory of formative causation the naive rats would slowly tune in on the morphogenetic field created by the successful training of the others. It is indeed a grotesque claim, and one can understand *Nature's* irritated response that Sheldrake's proposed tests are "time-consuming, inconclusive... and impractical in the sense that no self-respecting grant-making agency will take the proposals seriously" (an argument which may surprise those

who thought that scientists were dedicated seekers after truth). What has helped to improve Sheldrake's reputation is that the experiments seem already to have been done, by W. McDougall, F. A. E. Crew and W. E. Agar. McDougall was testing a Lamarckian hypothesis that trained rats should produce trained or more easily trainable offspring; his results, and those of the experimenters who followed him, ended by refuting the Lamarckian claim, but leaving the odd result that unrelated rats in other laboratories had apparently got the hang of the problem. Sheldrake proposes similar tests to check details of the hypothesis, and to exclude such reasonable alternatives as are proposed.

His idea has an ancestry. He notes especially the suggestions of Alister Hardy that psychic experience forms a species-blueprint which selects within the options made available by DNA, and of N. M. Piracy (B/P/S 10, 1960) that ESP and memory could both work by a sort of "resonance". His contribution has been to bring a wide range of examples, from crystallization and the folding-up of DNA to instinct and the learning of language within the theory, and to

himself in his recent study of the origin of quantum theory. The last four essays here are particularly concerned with the relations between social and biological theories, with special reference to evolution. This leads Greene to look much more closely at Herbert Spencer than historians of biology have been accustomed to do, and also at Darwin's social views. In a classic understatement, Darwin remarked in the *Origin* that in that work "light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history" but whether the light has been always well directed or has simply dazzled the onlookers is open to doubt. Like many contemporary Englishmen, Darwin saw the "inferior" races of mankind as being inexorably eliminated in the struggle for existence, and yet he could not go the whole hog and embrace an unqualified "social Darwinism". He recognized that helping the weak was the noblest part of our nature, and yet planned a chapter on the races of man in the condensed into the *Origin*. Greene is judicious in urging that to call Darwin a racist would be misleading, but that we should remember that he did not confront nature unaware of politics and social theory.

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Oxford University Press

commentary

Constructing an ideal

By Frances Spalding

Circle
Constructive Art in Britain 1934-40
Kettle's Yard Gallery, Cambridge.

Living with the "constructive idea" in the late 1930s meant a fairly streamlined existence. One might recline on an Isokon long chair but only in order to read a Penguin with the aid of a severely simple Bessie lamp. The mock-up interior found in this exhibition spurs bourgeois comforts for a rational aesthetic; it gravely displays not luxury or social prestige but right thinking. Books by Auden, Isherwood and MacNeice lie on top of Marcel Breuer's nesting tables, suggesting that such taste is both functional and anti-fascist. The style is studied and a little complacent. If it was adopted in Hampstead, where a number of artist and designer émigrés were then living, it was too Germanic for most, too removed from the English love of pretentiousness. It required an overriding preference for logical design, for clean, uncluttered living. Moreover its rationalism extended beyond the living-room into the environment, forming a vision of social organization.

This exhibition (which can be seen at Kettle's Yard until March 28) pays homage to the ideas found in *Circle*, a book first published in 1937 under

the editorship of J. L. Martin, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo. It included contributions from leading architects, artists and designers and attempted an international survey of what they loosely termed "constructive art". It was representative of current trends rather than a manifesto for a new movement, and it was concerned with the relationships between art, science, nature and architecture. Gabo's definition of the "constructive idea in art" was vague but inspiring. "A general concept of the world", he called it; "an ideology caused by life". As an ideal, it fired others with almost religious fervour. "It is an absolute belief in man," Barbara Hepworth averred; "an expression of the significance of life, a stimulation to greater effort in living," wrote Henry Moore.

In practice, as this show demonstrates, it meant an architecture which has a nautical air, makes use of modular units and reflects the designer's ideas about people's needs rather than the sociologists'. It discovers similarities between the ferro-concrete bridges built by the Swiss engineer Robert Maillart and the tensile strength created by ribbing and cross-bracing fibres in a Victoria Regia leaf. In art it meant the honing of an idea into relatively small-scale work in which form and content are one. It aims at objectivity and therefore favours an impersonal treatment. It aspires, with varying success, towards a universal idea of

beauty which in its harmony and balance is intended to make the viewer critical of the disorder in everyday life.

For the most part this art only awakens the spectator to the refined sensibility that has gone into its making. Hepworth's "Two Forms" (1934) is an example. The egg forms seem to float because the shadows beneath it make translucent the alabaster base, while the nearby rectangular form, modified in relation to the egg, has been shaved into a soft wedge shape that rises like a sail. It is an acutely subtle piece, but the difference between this and Mondrian's "Composition, White and Red" (1935), which hangs in the centre of the gallery, is that between an art that cuts away in order to refine and that which intensifies and goes on adding to the sensation described. The Mondrian, with its sheer, stunning authority, is the product of something more than taste. Its single red rectangle bursts out of the top left corner like a sudden release of tension within the dynamic equilibrium held taut by the black grid.

Equally uncompromising are Nicholson's white reliefs, several of which are here exhibited. One miniature relief, projected as a backcloth for Massine's *Seventh Symphony* ballet, suggests that a theatrical element may lie behind much constructive art: John Piper's abstracts could be regarded as an arrangement of scenic flats; much of the sculpture demands

a stage-like base. It is as if this art requires a platform on which it could withdraw from life. It is contemplative and remote, and, like the book, has a highbrow seriousness that deters it universal appeal.

The hope that such rigorous purity would become popular taste seems incredible nowadays. But the book itself contains a suggestion of doubt. While Corbusier told of the greater happiness, individual liberty and collective vitality that the machine would bring, Lewis Mumford saw that, if used as an ornament, half the machine's achievements "mock the very mechanical and scientific principles it seeks to enshrine". By the time *Circle* was published a younger generation of artists were reacting against the extreme asceticism of this art. The Euston Road School was set up with a commitment to a more easily comprehended, realistic painting and in 1938 it put on the "Picture of London" exhibition to which every tenth Smith or Brown in the London telephone directory was invited. It too saw a social role for art. And within ten years one of its founders, Victor Pasmore, had come full circle, championing a return to constructivist abstraction.

The exhibition catalogue, *Circle* Constructive Art in Britain 1934-40, edited by Jeremy Lewison (88pp, Kettle's Yard Gallery, £3.25 until March 28 then £4.95, 0 907074 12 X) is available from Kettle's Yard, Northampton Street, Cambridge CB3 0AQ.

Leading a generation

By Humphrey Carpenter

The Auden Landscape
BBC 2

This is television biography at its best: plenty of new tidbits to offer to those who already know the outline of Auden's life, and a lucid and visually well-documented account of the man and his environment for those coming to the story for the first time. Adam Low, the producer, takes the landscapes of Auden's poetry as his theme, quite justifiably, since, as Robert Robinson's narration reminds us, the Auden landscape is "one in which other poets have been forced to walk". Quite why Auden had this influence is not explained; indeed the programme's only real failing is that it gives the impression of him as a lone figure, slightly dotty, striding across limestone and past gnomes and pre-schools, running away from mother and then turning into a mother-figure himself, while everyone else watches from a distance, amused. There is little sense of Auden as the leader of a generation.

This impression is heightened by the fact that Isherwood and Spender, filmed in comfy armchairs, have the appearance of two respectable elderly gentlemen looking back with amusement at the antics of funny old Wystan. *The Day Before the Day*, Isherwood tells us, was "an enormous hodgepodge", into which he and Auden threw anything that took their fancy. Spender remembers Auden, towards the end of his life, coming to stay and searching the shelves for his own books, which seemed to be the only thing he wanted to read. Ageing, pathetic Wystan. And at Christ Church, that constant question, "at night, table?" "Do you see in the basin?" "The which one Canon replied: 'Not if there's an open window.'" Repetitive, half-sensile Wystan. Yes, but he wasn't; read the reviews he wrote towards the end and you will see that his mind never stopped. Oliver Sacks, a New York friend, only knew him in those last years and thought, "one of the greatest moralists of all time." Sacks appears in the programme but does not say this.

So *The Auden Landscape* shows us a caricatured Auden. Apart from which, it could scarcely be better. Tireless picture-research unearthed many new photographic glimpses of his childhood. We see the entire *Night Mail* sequence which has his poem as commentary (how poor the visuals are compared to the words), and there is archive film to show us what Iceland looked like in the 1930s, when Auden, MacNeice, and Michael Yates made their comic pilgrimage round it. Golo Mann gives us the scarcely necessary reassurance that his sister Erika never went to bed with Auden after marrying him, and Auden's surviving brother John, commenting on Wystan's belief that he would be no use to anyone if he came back to England once war had broken out, remarks sardonically "My father was an Air Raid Warden at the age of sixty-eight". Meanwhile Robert Robinson tells the story in his familiar *Stop the Week* epigrammatic style, with lines like: "It's hard to feel that Auden's journey to the Spanish Civil War was more than a day trip", and "The life, like the face, developed cracks".

Even if the programme were not so eye-catching, it would be worth sitting through for the funeral. Adam Low has got hold of footage of Auden's burial at Kirchstetten, and there in close-up, for a few unforgettable seconds, is the bowed and grief-stricken figure of Chester Kallman, who shared Auden's life from 1939 to the end. Scarcely ever does television show us private sorrow so believably.

The Department of Education and Science's Library and Information Services Council has recently published a report which considers possible new developments in information technology (*The Future of Libraries and Information Services*: 1. The organizational and policy framework; 2. Working together within a national framework, DES Library Information Series Number 12, HMSO, £4.50, 0 11-270542 1). The report also calls for a review of the future financing of library and information services and for research into the benefits of cooperative arrangements on a national scale and improved coordination of regional authority library services.

Salon rituals

By Simon Berry

The Balcony
The Citizens' Theatre, Glasgow

Genet's elaborate stage directions for *The Balcony* demand a succession of ornate sets to convey the "house of illusions" visited by the brothel clients during the play.

As high priest of fetish and ritualism; Genet requested that the vestments and trappings belonging to the Bishop be larger than life-size. The actors should wear padding and corsetry, so that after they have finished their session they shrink to human size again. Madame Irma refers to "the liturgies of the brothel" and Carmen, her side-de-camp comments aptly: "Entering a brothel means rejecting the world". Genet seems to be saying that society demands figureheads, but frail humanity cannot meet the requirements without perverting itself.

Such a scenario needs acting and presentation in the style of Grand Guignol, but Philip Frowse directs the play more as a West End entertainment or a piece of unpleasant Shaw. The major triumph of the evening is the ornate set which faithfully reflects the gilded scrollwork and other rococo details of the theatre's decor. The audience, are faced by a fourth wall that for a brief moment, seems unnervingly like a mirror. A row of footlights throws into harsh relief the clean white hand-towels, washhand basins, even a bidet, with red plush velvet furnishings and paintings placed like altar pieces. When the lights are dimmed the feelings of ritual cleansing and consecration is heightened.

Unfortunately absent in this production is a similar quality in the performance. Genet's characters are aware of their predicament and underneath these grotesque, often salacious articulations there is a human dilemma which might be labelled tragic. The play's darker side is emphasized in the revolution going on outside the bordello walls. Chantal, one of the prostitutes, is taken up by the revolutionaries and used as a Joan of Arc figurehead, an ironic demonstration of the power of

the image. Strangely, this new translation by Robert David MacDonald, which lifts indulgent speeches leaves out the episode where Roger the leader of the revolution protests his love to her. This gives point to the later scene where he is in the brothel (enjoying the illusion of being the Chief of Police, a strutting Gauleiter played at full volume by Patrick Hannaway) and castrates himself rather than leave to face the real world again. The power of image and ritual is too much even for those who seek to overthrow it.

The best performances come from the ladies of the brothel. Julie Le Grand plays Carmen as the whore who stoops to conquer. From being sinner, thief and soldier's moul she has found the way to manipulate those who exploit her. Ida Schuster's portrayal of Madame Irma as the owner of a well-run establishment extracts plenty of comedy from this traditional bit of male humour. But she also makes the most of the long speech rhapsodizing about her thirty-eight salons with all the gilt and fine details that give her customers such pleasure.

Hunter-Gatherer Foraging Behavior

Biographic & Archaeological Analyses
Bruce M. Wilson & Eric A. Smith, editors

Nine young anthropologists contribute to this new perspective on hunter-gatherer behavior. Blending theoretical concerns with empirical evaluations, the studies elucidate the methods and concepts of evolutionary ecology and apply them to an interpretation of the archaeological record of hunter-gatherers in the Old and New Worlds.

Prehistoric Archaeology & Ecology Series
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CHICAGO

commentary

An eye for effigies

By Kate Flint

Church Builders Remembered
Coopers' Hall, Bristol

Philip Larkin's earl and countless, lying side by side on an Arundel tomb, owe their poignancy to a "sculptor's sweet commissioned grace". One hand rests intimately, unguilted, upon another. Time has brought this once private stone gesture into public prominence, turning the memorial into an unintended image of fidelity. It is on such details that Neil Andrews focuses in his Bristol exhibition of drawings, *Church Builders Remembered*. For him, as an atheist, churches exist not as spiritual centres but solely as works of art, constructed under the erratic and arbitrary patronage of Church and State. Yet since they were designed for worship, rather than as objects of aesthetic self-sufficiency, appealing features have often been hidden in dark corners or high out of mortal sight. Moreover, iconoclasts and ecclesiastical renovators alike have remoulded the original fabric, so that headless angels, empty niches and ornate Victorian pulpits accidentally supply surreal effects.

Andrews claims that most criticism of ecclesiastical art has come from within the church, thus tending to judge works according to the degree to which they embody Christian doctrine, rather than by any excellence

of design. He attempts to redress the balance in favour of secularity. Like Larkin, he favours effigies as a subject. While the individuals commemorated are perhaps best forgotten – crusaders who decapitated infidels, merchants who profited from slavery – their sculptural qualities are both decorative and humorous. Thus he focuses on the grotesque figures at the base of Edmund Blamont's tomb in St Stephen's, Bristol; on the way in which crusaders' feet sprawl, in ungainly fashion, on their canine foot-rests; on the expression of ecstasy on the face of another dog on a tomb in the Lord Mayor's chapel as a knight tickles him with his toe. Elsewhere, it is pattern and texture which attract Andrews's soft pencil and waxy acrylics. A leg encased in rippling chain mail emerges from its armorial casing like an insect from a stone chrysalis. Exteriors are valued not for their proportions, but for the flinty pebbles which form a rough-cast mosaic on the walls of Burnham Deepdale church, or for the rubble-built porch and grainy door which adorn the squat facade of Penn church in Buckinghamshire.

Andrews is no architectural draughtsman, although capable of picking out the subtleties of Gothic stonework. Rather, he draws on church fabric as a sourcebook of design. Despite the title of the exhibition, his enterprise is not one of nostalgia; rather, like Larkin's poem, it is an attempt to look with a modern eye upon the productions of the past.



A detail from the frontispiece to the 1686 Works of Sir Thomas Browne

The Rector of Diss

By Paula Neuss

Garland for a Hoar Head
BBC Radio 3

John Arden's new work for radio, directed by Alfred Bradley, celebrates John Skelton, poet laureate, satirist of Wolsey and rector of Diss in Norwich. Skelton would have been pleased to hear so much of his scurrilous writing on the air over 450 years after his death but it would have disappointed him that his more stately works do not get a look-in.

The Skelton legend began in his own poems, where he sometimes presents himself as a lewd ignorant. It developed through the anonymous *Morte Tales of Skelton* (1567), and for Pope he became the "beastly Skelton" quoted by heads of houses. Edmund Blunden tried to redress the balance by claiming that "Skelton habitually sets forth like a cheerful sunrise and a jolly workman", but it was too late: the lewd vicar image had stuck.

Now John Arden has taken this legend to its logical extreme in *Garland for a Hoar Head*, where the aged poet appears as "a rather nasty old man, scrabbling himself under the bedclothes like a crapulous hedgehog... with fartings and flout" like a Beckett hero, with "bad teeth, dandruff, egotisms, winstains" and an arthritic knee. He is staying (in 1522) with the Countess of Surrey in the elegant castle Sheriff Hutton, and loses no opportunity to talk bawdy to her maids. In a drunken frenzy he regurgitates much of his earlier writing, so that even the more obviously beautiful poems ("My darling dear, my daisy flower") are mulched with filth, and the poet who preached the importance of measure and the necessity to "beware of excess" is swallowed up by the old soak whose most frequent word is "Gup".

Perhaps this was indeed how Skelton ended. The Jonestown, with its voice of Freddie Jones, and its frequent flashes of regret and its self-consciousness, derived from Manierism, the introductory display juxtaposes Continental and English examples. Among these appears Lomazzo's treatise on painting, "The Bible of Mannerism", in Haydocke's translation, of which it would have been worth noting that Browne owned (and read) a copy. A drawing by Inigo Jones for a Jonssonian masque exemplifies the often crude yoking together of Gothic and Italianate in Jacobean England, prompting reflection on Browne's Janus nature, his belief in both modern science and the persistence of this duality, embodied in the porch of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford, whose barleysugar columns adorn an essentially Gothic structure. Forty years later, when Wren wished to fill in the junctions between the nave, choir, and transepts of St Paul's with magnificent curves, the medieval-minded clergy forced him to revert to the strict cruciform plan, with its inevitably tank and gloomy corners on the north side. Nor was Browne's double allegiance exceptional among intellectuals, given Boyle's and Newton's beliefs in alchemy and religion. Another symptom of the transitional character of the man and the age, not shown here, is the mixed ances-

A Janus nature

By Robin Robbins

Sir Thomas Browne and the Baroque
Royal College of Physicians

"Prose is architecture", snarled Hemingway, "and the age of the Baroque is over." Yet its solidity endures, and its exuberance continues to delight, in literature as in the visual arts. The analogy between them, verbally elaborated fifty years ago by Morris Croll, is suggestively illustrated in the current exhibition at the Royal College of Physicians until July 2, *Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682) and the Baroque*. Books from the College Library – chiefly editions of Browne's – are interspersed with reproductions of paintings, drawings, buildings, gardens and sculptures which show characteristics akin to those of Browne's writing.

Taking up a suggestion that his love of the complex, the bizarre, the concealed, and his self-conscious style, derived from Manierism, the introductory display juxtaposes Continental and English examples. Among these appears Lomazzo's treatise on painting, "The Bible of Mannerism", in Haydocke's translation, of which it would have been worth noting that Browne owned (and read) a copy. A drawing by Inigo Jones for a Jonssonian masque exemplifies the often crude yoking together of Gothic and Italianate in Jacobean England, prompting reflection on Browne's Janus nature, his belief in both modern science and the persistence of this duality, embodied in the porch of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford, whose barleysugar columns adorn an essentially Gothic structure. Forty years later, when Wren wished to fill in the junctions between the nave, choir, and transepts of St Paul's with magnificent curves, the medieval-minded clergy forced him to revert to the strict cruciform plan, with its inevitably tank and gloomy corners on the north side. Nor was Browne's double allegiance exceptional among intellectuals, given Boyle's and Newton's beliefs in alchemy and religion. Another symptom of the transitional character of the man and the age, not shown here, is the mixed ances-

try of Browne's handwriting, a foul mongrel begotten of Elizabethan secretary-hand and Italic.

The most impressive analogies of the play of light and shade in the work of Browne occur in that part of the display concerned with the period of *Religio Medici*. The meaningful highlighting of the forehead and elongated hands in Bernardo Strozzi's portrait of Monteverdi (whose music, it is observed, with its vivid variations of tempo and intensity, Browne probably heard at Padua soon after this picture was painted), and the strength, fullness, and animation of Rembrandt's "Anatomy of Lesson" (painted just after he had left Leiden, a year before Browne arrived there), aptly prefigure the force and chiaroscuro of some of Browne's prose. Analogies must not be blindly pursued, however: to link allusions to intellectual ecstasy in *Religio Medici* with Bernini's "St Teresa" would be to make a Crashaw of Browne, ignoring his detached remarks about "Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exultation, liquefaction, transformation, the loss of the Spouse, gustation of God, and ingress into the divine shadow". He did not go all the way with such Counter-Reformation enthusiasms any more than with Ranters and Fifth Monarchy Men.

The pictures around the copies of *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, his greatest work, are pleasant enough, but hardly related to it, the catalogue barely adumbrating its riches, but with the period of *Hydriotaphia* (or *Urn-Burial*) and *The Garden of Cyrus* some delightfully appropriate images are presented. The risks and successes of Baroque tomb-sculpture are exemplified in the Babraham church monument to the Benets – two noble animals ludicrously pompous in the grave, apparently braying and neighing to be let into heaven – and in the successfully achieved patios of the Thomas Sackville monument at Withynham, where the loving parents kneel at either side of their reclining boy. In the plans and views of gardens, quinques are to be seen, interestingly, in Evelyn's at Sayes Court, five years before Browne's tract, and a variation, criss-crossed alleys, at Ham somewhat later, both very different from the flamboyant curlicues of Vaux-le-Vicomte in the same period.

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CHATTO & WINDUS

commentary

An identity problem

By Ray Ockenden

Baal
BDC TV

Three things are immediately striking about the BBC television presentation of Brecht's *Baal*. One is the little-known version of the play which the director, Alan Clarke, has chosen; another the use he makes of the screen; the third, of course, is David Bowie.

What we see here is not Brecht's "first play" of 1918, but (with a few modifications), the 1926 version of it, expressly designed for the stage by an established playwright. It clearly recommended itself to Clarke for its brevity (less than half the length of the 1918 version) and for its sharper view of social realities. It is not yet a political play - only after it was completed did Brecht immerse himself in Marx's *Capital*; but the sense of Baal as a victim of society is much stronger than before.

Those who know the earlier version will miss, in this tauter script, much of the colour and some of the poetry of the younger Brecht. We have lost the glimpses of Baal's mother, the planned bull-spectacular, and the sexual threesome. Above all, the sense of Baal's closeness to nature and his enthusiasm for the open road have diminished; by 1926 Brecht's own sensitivity to nature was going into a ten-year eclipse. Instead we have Eckhard's admiration for Manhattan and the growing jungle of the cities. The extended role of Eckhard in this version provides opportunities which Jonathan Kent seizes well, making him a lustier vagabond and a more attractive character than Baal. On the other hand, the relationship between the two men, explicitly homosexual in the first version, is now less distinct, and with it the motive for Baal's act of murder.

Clarke sees this *Baal* as a play of interiors. The settings are rich in detail and carefully observed by a camera which keeps its distance and eschews close-ups. The main character is thus placed in and confined by his environment; at the same time, the viewer feels that he is not allowed to come close enough to a problematic individual to understand him. In the last scene (a change from the night setting called for by the text) daylight and nature exist outside the open door towards which Baal struggles as he dies, but the camera denies us any sight of it. The sense of Baal's imprisonment is heightened by Clarke's use of the split screen, which provides an emphatic frame for Bowie as he purifies the scenes with verses from the Baal hymn - plainly and forcefully sung.

The problem seems to lie with the 1926 version itself, short of the paradoxical element and much of the flamboyance and humour of the first version. Brecht's view of Baal is here poised between a celebration of the convinced vagabond and the later conception of an alienated drop-out. In many ways we are witnessing a leave-taking from an earlier self, and it is often Eckhard's views, rather than Baal's which carry the play's weight. Voice, Clarke and Bowie make a valiant attempt to rescue both the main character and the play itself, but in this version *Baal* remains a document of Brecht's changing attitudes rather than a convincing piece in its own right.

Author, Author

Competition No 61

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, April 2. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that, the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to the Editor, Times Literary Supplement, PO Box 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, and marked "Author" on the envelope. The solution and results will appear on April 9.

1. Here is the skull of a beaver, and that of Sir Christopher Wren. You observe: in both these specimens, the prodigious development of the organ of constructiveness.

2. This is the work of the original architect. A very great man called Roger Pratt. You must always remember this name! Tom, He's not enough known. He had filthy luck. Most of his work's been pulled down or burned by accident.

3. You too, proposed make falling. Erect new wonders, and the old repair. Jones and Palladio to themselves restore, And be what'er Vitruvius was before.

The Collins Biennial Religious Book Award of £1,000 has been awarded to the Reverend Professor George B. Caird for his book, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, which was published by Duckworth in 1980.

to the editor

'The Pursuit of Signs'

Sir, - Alan Sheridan (Letters, February 19) suggests that "truth" in the novel, even if we agree there is such a thing, is relative, "a shifting cultural creation". That does not dispose of it. Every experienced reader knows what he is looking for, whether in the *Odyssey* or in *Olympos*, Henry James or Henry Green. Fiction assumes a reader seeking what is true, whether for the age or for all time: the relation of the two is frequently a significant ingredient in the fiction. This has nothing to do with the techniques of realism which Alan Sheridan supposes me to favour, and which he rightly says have no more access to truth than any other kind of invention, fantasy included. But what matters is that writer and reader should know that truth is what they are after, not the invention and solution of a puzzle.

I took *Gone with the Wind* as an example because its claims to truth are marginal; but they do exist, and the "stereotyped romantic fiction" brings them out. At least I think so. Alan Sheridan does not. What matters, though, is that now we are talking the same language, and in discussion we could find out why we feel as we do. The books would be reading us, and we should be reading each other.

That is exactly what poetics tries to stop us doing. It has a horror of the personal, a squeamishness about enquiring into the sources of taste, preference and prejudice as between reader and reader. Its reason, not fully admitted, is that instruction in literature should not have to take note of personalities and backgrounds among students and teachers, any more than does maths or science. Contact with literature as a presentation of living that reveals our own lives embarrasses it. And, as Alan Sheridan implies, no modern instructor can tolerate the apparent impasse of "This is true for me" "But not for me".

In fact such an impasse is just where the best discussion begins, even between critics. My eye has just lighted on a superlative piece in *Essays in Criticism* for January 1982. It is by Ann Pasternak Slater and entitled "Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*: Right Things in Wrong Places", in the course of it she takes issue with Malcolm Bradbury's reading of the novel and observes that it shows "a curious insensitivity to

character and moral tone". His reading of the novel prefers not to confront Waugh's personality, the devices used for his moral purpose, his sense of the truth of the time. The author of the article examines these matters masterfully and acutely, and in so doing reveals the essential truths in the novel.

David Lodge, who has expressed some uneasiness that the most important work now in progress in criticism is no longer comprehensible to the cultivated layman, has none the less also asserted that we cannot go back to the "innocent" days of Dr Leavis. Who is being innocent here? The practitioners of poetics and semiotics could be thought to live much more out of the world than the critics of an older humanist tradition.

JOHN BAYLEY,
St Catherine's College, Oxford.

Flora Robson

Sir, - May I point out in reply to Nicholas de Jongh (Letters, February 19) that in my review of *Flora* (January 29) I did not only attribute the curtailment of Flora Robson's career to a change in theatrical fashion, but made it quite clear there were other reasons? Nor did I write, as de Jongh claimed, that she merely played repressed spinsters. In spite of de Jongh's assertions to the contrary she did not infrequently in the 1960s, and hardly at all in the 1970s. What I wrote was that she was not asked to act much, not that she was not asked at all.

GARRY O'CONNOR,
24 Chalfont Road, Oxford OX2 6TL.

Lukács and Western Values

Sir, - As an unemployed scholar - one, not at the moment able to spend his time teaching or marking papers - I resent the implication in George Steiner's letter (February 19) that the "unprecedented contempt" for the claims of the arts and of the universities "of the powers that be in many Western societies" is morally or practically equivalent to the intellectual, physical and moral terror exercised on principle against all scholars of independent spirit under Communist régimes. I may believe that it is unfortunate that so many young people of small talent, but fashionable opinions, were able to

get themselves tenured jobs in education during the late 1960s and the 1970s, and that it is equally unfortunate that the funding authorities do not have the will or the discernment to realize that the absence of new blood will lower the value of the research produced and further an already alarming provincialization; but I also believe in the Western values of freedom and autonomy and do not regard my fate as sealed simply because I cannot get a certain kind of job.

I know that many others in my position complain loudly, as does Steiner, that being made redundant, or not getting a job, is as bad as (if not worse than) being enslaved to political tyranny - but at least having work for which one is trained. I must say that I find that an incredibly arrogant and narrow view, especially for those who by training ought to be especially sensitive to questions of freedom and oppression. It displays, to repeat George Steiner's words, "unprecedented contempt" for the actions and sufferings of those brave spirits, who in the countries where Marxism has been victorious as a political doctrine risk being deprived, not only of their livelihood, but of the chance of ever doing what they really desire. How many ordinary, decent historians of literature, linguists, historians and critics are there in every East European country for every East European country for every Lukács lending his considerable talent to the "objective support" - to use a phrase favoured by Marxists - of the most tyrannous and brutal régimes on the planet today?

DAVID GRESS,
Marienborg Alle 3, 4780 Stege, Denmark.

Victorian Wedding-Nights

Sir, - J. G. Weightman's admirable review (January 1) of books by Andrea Dworkin and Susan Griffin refers to "the surprises that certain Victorian gentlemen, such as Tennyson, experienced on their wedding nights". Tennyson as well? The inference usually given is that of Ruskin (see, for example, Kenneth Clark's introduction to *Praeterita*), and it would be interesting to learn more of Tennyson's presumably unfortunate experience. Were others of the Victorian literati similarly afflicted?

J. H. C. LEACH,
Pembroke College, Oxford.

Among this week's contributors

L. H. BARFIELD is Senior Lecturer in European Prehistory at Birmingham University. His book *Northern Italy Before Rome* was published in 1971.

ARNOLD BECHMAN's books include *Nine Lies About America*, 1972.

BERNARD BERGONZI's books include *The Turn of a Century*, 1973, and *Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 1977.

RONALD BLYTHE's new book, *From the Headlands*, will appear in the autumn.

T. B. BOTTOMORE's books include *Political Sociology*, 1979, and *Modern Interpretations of Marx*, 1981.

RICHARD BROWN is co-editor of the *James Joyce Broadsheet*.

JOHN BUXTON is Reader Emeritus in English Literature at Oxford. His books include *Elizabethan Taste*, 1963.

HUMPHRY CARPENTER's biography of W. H. Auden was published last year.

STEPHEN CLARK's books include *Aristotle's Man*, 1975, and *The Moral Status of Animals*, 1977.

ERIC DE MAINT was the BBC's Music Correspondent, 1963-66 and 1972-74.

PETER FRANCE is Professor of French at the University of Edinburgh. His books include *Rachin's Rhetoric*, 1965, and, as translator, *Diderot's Letters to Sophie Voland*, 1972.

ROGER GARFITT's most recent collection of poems, *The Broken Road*, will be published shortly.

CHRISTOPHER HOPE's novel, *A Separate Development*, was published last year.

P. J. KAVANAGH's *Selected Poems* will be published shortly.

JAMES KIRKUP teaches Comparative Literature at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Japan.

D. M. KNIGHT's books include *Natural Science Books in English 1600-1900*, 1972.

JONATHAN LEAR is a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge.

KENNETH S. LYNN teaches American History at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

SCOTT LEATHART's books include *Trees of the World*, 1977, and *Exploring Woodlands and Forests*, 1978.

SIR CHRISTOPHER LEVER's books include *The Naturalized Animals of the British Isles*, 1977.

KENNETH MELLANBY's most recent book, *Farming and Wildlife*, was published last year.

PAULA NEUSS has edited *Skelton's Magnificence* for the Revels Plays.

ONORA O'NEILL is Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Essex.

RAY OCKENDEN is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

ALEX PRAYDA is Lecturer in Soviet and East European Politics at the University of Reading.

JASPER RIDLEY's most recent book, *The History of England*, was published last year.

RUTH ISABEL ROSS is author of *Irish Wild Flowers*, 1980.

FRANCES SPALDING's biography of Roger Fry was published last year.

RACHEL TRICKETT is Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford.

FRANK TUOHY's collection of short stories, *Live Ball*, was published in 1978.

JEREMY WALDRON is a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

ALWYN WHEELER's *The Tidal Thames: the history of a river and its fishes* was published in 1979.

A gadfly in Washington

By Alastair Forbes

MICHAEL TEAGUE:

Mrs. L.
Conversations with Alice Roosevelt Longworth
203pp. Duckworth. £8.95.
0 7136 1602 1

1982 being the year Franklin Delano Roosevelt has to share a centennial with Igor Stravinsky (next year it will be Keynes and Mussolini who are so coupled), it is fitting that there should have appeared, as a curtain-raiser to its celebration and as a political footnote to his private and public life, this entertaining, partly pictorial and partly tape-recorded memoir, by his cousin Alice. President Theodore Roosevelt's eldest daughter, who, though Franklin's junior by only two years, succeeded in surviving him by no less than three decades. The book has been most agreeably put together by a handsome English resident of Washington, photographed with his heroine on the back of the jacket.

He is one Michael Teague, whose Alice seems to have acquired at the very end of her life as an occasional "walker" - to borrow current American argot - and who seems to have become more often an occasional companion at her esoteric Massachusetts Avenue tea-table, where he was rather unduly *épaulé* by the inevitable Jackson's Earl Grey, than a *stammagast* at her more exoteric but rarer dinner-parties.

Mr Teague vouchsafes in his preface details of his very first conversation with her, in which she asked him if he researched he was then conducting into the Delano family's commercial past in China had happened to uncover any ramifications with the opium trade which, she absurdly added, "would make Franklin a criminal". This clearly demonstrates just how deliquescent the old lady's memory had already become, by the time he got around to catching her. Certainly some ten or so years earlier - I myself had found that she was perfectly well aware that as far back as 1859 old Warren Delano had bought the big Rose Hill property in Hong Kong where F.D.R.'s mother was brought up, and that in 1867 his eldest daughter Dora had married my cousin Willa, a junior partner in Russell and Company, then the American equivalent of Britain's Jardine, Matheson and not a jot less deeply involved in opium dealing. Of the latter circumstance one of the Kewick brothers took teasing pleasure in reminding Eleanor Roosevelt, when once she called in at the Crown Colony, a story she cheerfully repeated against herself in her autobiography, which Alice Longworth certainly read in both its successive parts. In the capitalist calendar, such cynical accidental business methods can be counted no more than venial sins, hardly to be visited on a grandson. At bottom, Franklin's only crime in Alice's eyes, though one she could not forgive, was to be the sprig of the Hyde Park branch that grew to put the whole Oyster Bay plantation in the shade. As she put it to Teague: "There we were - the Roosevelts - bubbling up to the eyeballs, beyond the eyeballs, and then, who should come sailing down the river but Nemeas in the person of Franklin. We were out... We had used to say 'Poor Franklin': the joke was on us."

Also sailing down the river came her first cousin Eleanor, her personality transformed and toughened by the shock of her husband's infidelity followed by his fight against painful illness and the terrible paraplegic handicap it left him for half his adult life. Of Alice, looking back on their largely shared childhood and girlhood, Eleanor, a year younger, later wrote: "While I always admired her, I was always afraid of her." Of Eleanor, Alice said to Teague that "She was always making herself out to be an ugly duckling but she was really rather attractive", much the verdict of Dorothy Strachey Bussey, who had found her at the remarkable Marie Solvestre's London academy

"a tall slim elegant girl who was so much more intelligent than all the others". Indeed, if her beastly rich Hall grandmother had only had the common sense and kindness to have her teeth and jaw fixed by a competent orthodontist she might have acquired the beauty to put Alice's nose seriously out of joint in more ways than one. As for her do-gooding side, it was not a by-product of her real or imagined plainness: she had inherited it from their Roosevelt grandfather. "It took with Eleanor, but not with me. I never did those things. They bored me." In Alice's long life her only unswerving aim was "to have a good time and not give a damn". It was not surprising that even his own sisters should think Eleanor far more like Theodore - who himself had a deeply ingrained do-good vein running parallel to his often regrettable sabre-rattling, big-stick-waving urge - than any of his own children.

Theodore had gone steady almost since the nursery with Edith Carow from Boston (who would have been discernible in the fascinating photograph showing little Theodore and his brother Elliott - Eleanor's father - looking out from an upper window at Lincoln's funeral procession, had she not cried so much at first sight of it that she had to be "shut up in the back room to keep her quiet"). He had even proposed to her - though, as in the song, he said *tomatoy* and she said *tomatoy* - before going to Harvard, where he had met and fallen for the much prettier Alice "Sunshine" Lee. At twenty-two he had married this rather Dora Copperfield-looking and sounding "Proper Bostonian" girl of nineteen, proud of her "Cabot connections", who four years later died from a textbook case of undiagnosed and untreated scurvy after giving birth to another and very different Alice. The latter, grown up, realized that her father had "tried to forget he had ever been married to my mother, to blot the whole episode out of his mind. He didn't just never mention her to me, he never mentioned her name to anyone." He also "obviously felt tremendously guilty" about marrying - after a decent interval of three years spent on the North Dakota ranch where he had once graduated from an asthmatic weakening to a strenuous living Rough Rider - his first love, who, he feared, would be vexed by the living reminder of his first inconstancy that was little Alice. And vexed she undoubtedly was, not least by the tomboy rebelliousness that was in part clearly Alice's attempt to break through the traumatic wall of silence surrounding her father's years with her mother. So much so that when Alice left the White House for her honeymoon and was thanking her stepmother for the reception and everything else, she was taken aback to hear Edith Roosevelt exclaim, "I want you to know that I'm glad to see you leave. You have never been anything but trouble." Greatly to her credit, Alice calmly replied: "That's alright, Mother, I'll be back in a few weeks and you won't feel the same way." Reported Alice to Teague: "And I was and she didn't. Well, I don't think she did. We were able to laugh and jeer about a good many things together." That was the Boston bit they had in common.

Her recollection of her middle years (she is often pinching other people's stories, or pretending that incidents happened in her presence when anyone familiar with the real protagonists knows that they did not) is demonstrably fallible. And inevitably, in oldest age she grew increasingly addled-pated. "Don't ask Ford who the President is!" she had to be admonished by her young grandchildren in the aftermath of *Schadenfreude* aside, she must have enjoyed that particular Washington episode all the more for recalling that her own single effort for Uncle Sam in the First World War (apart from donating tools for good, war before the whistle went) on her first and only day at Coz Eleanor's Railroad Station Canteen for the Forces,

had been to do some rough-and-ready pre-FBI and CIA bugging of the place of assignment selected by Bernie Baruch for canoodling with a putative Rumanian Mata Hari, a dirty trick done, to Eleanor's great disgust, on behalf of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin himself, neither then nor later above a dirty trick or two in any cause. Nevertheless, read in conjunction with some of the treasures unearthed from her photograph albums, her memories of childhood and girlhood constitute a real find for all students of history, whether frivolous like herself or serious like her father.

She did not often draw the best from that remarkable man, whom, she said, "I can still hear talking about Jefferson with Cabot Lodge as if he were an obnoxious neighbour of theirs". His great friend and best man, later British Ambassador in Washington, the charming Cecil Spring-Rice, used laughingly to warn visitors to the White House, "Always remember, the President's real age is about six!" All that roller-skating and bicycle-riding all over the house, to say nothing of the being given a ride in the lift and the beguiling complexity of T.R.'s Pied Piper welcome - "Children, come with me and I'll teach you how to walk on stilts!" - must have made that modest but stylish little Pennsylvania Avenue place a place of prime fun not equalled since under any administration, not even that of Jack Kennedy by whom, for all his sometimes coarse Irish ways, Alice found herself as fascinated as with his more complex brother Bobby, rightly diagnosed by her as "a revolutionary priest manque".

Long before he got to Washington, Theodore had, in marked contrast to his godson Franklin later, been constantly and intimately involved in his children's lives and pastimes. There is a wonderful photograph of him at Sagamore Hill, his Long Island home, standing, stopwatch in hand, while the rest of the brood wait to come under strict orders, he times his tiny youngest in handicap running race round the Barn. That same youngest, who as soon as he was grown up to be killed flying, in action on the Western Front in 1918, has also been caught, Panama-straw-batted in a summer meadow, by a pioneer Kodak as discerning as any *Attrix* of Renoir, Jean, in a composition worthy of Renoir, Pierre-Auguste. T.R. himself has even romantically *poesayed* Alice posing as *la jeune paysanne du village* - *the young peasant of the village* - in a photo of Thérèse, and also "the girls of the family" as a child yet more touching than those that appeared in Joe Lash's dazzling and definitive biography of a decade ago, a book even Alice had to admit to Teague was "excellent".

Teddy Roosevelt's letters to his children were understandably adored by them, not least for the droll drawings with which they were peppered. Perhaps that is why Alice, though she could talk like the devil, could herself only write like Poor Poll, even her short-lived bitchy anti-F.D.R. newspaper column soon, in the words of her spiking Editor, "falling by its own weight", just like the autobiography she with difficulty managed to squeeze from her pen.

Perhaps not until H.H. Asquith did T.R. have an equal as a deeply committed politician-parent. I seem to recall Violet Bonham Carter having difficulty in dating a letter, which she was sure from its idiom must have been written to her when she was a mature grown-up, until she came to its concluding sentence: "I am so glad, so interested to hear that you can now do up your own garters!"

Alice Longworth coolly boasted to Teague that she had been asked by a Gay Liberation group to become its first Honorary Homosexual. It is true that there is a rather fuzzy map of her arm-in-arm with Miss "Ellie" Sears, described by her as "first of the masculine young girls; snored a lot but with great wit" and whom recall, as she approached old age, as



Alice Longworth imitating Eleanor Roosevelt's toothy grin - "a comely but easy target" - photographed by the author, from the book under review.

In all senses the smartest Sapphic out of Boston I ever met. On the other hand she hardly deigned to confide in him about her marriage to "that insane, delightful man", the musical and singularly civilized Nick Longworth, who came to the Congress, over which he was for long to preside as Speaker, from top-drawer Cincinnati via Harvard and the Port-cellan (that ghastly upper-crust little freemasonry with its babyish mumbo-jumbo, which, by excluding from its membership the young F.D.R., helped to give him the sharp motivation that was in later years to bring him down more often than not on the side of radicalism). Alice quotes the usually ridiculous Mrs Ogden Mills once pointedly remarking to her multi-millionaire husband: "Why do you bother about going into politics? You see very unattractive people there." Teague has included a charming childhood photograph of the always attractive Nick Longworth playing a barefoot Tom Sawyer by the Ohio riverbank to the Huck Finn of his equally barefoot sister Clara, of whose serious interest in and successful books about her great passion, Shakespeare, we are told nothing. Of her French husband the Comte de Chambrun we are informed only that his family owned Baccarat Glass, useful for Alice's entertaining, but nothing about their son marrying the only daughter of Pierre Laval or of their own politics, which, whenever I heard them from their lips, seemed to me to be far to the murky right of those of the white-tie-wearing rug-to-riches Auvergnat Vichy Prime Minister who was later shot for treason.

One-liners are the notes that go to make the background music of those for which Mrs Longworth has hitherto been given the credit recall Violet Bonham Carter having difficulty in dating a letter, which she was sure from its idiom must have been written to her when she was a mature grown-up, until she came to its concluding sentence: "I am so glad, so interested to hear that you can now do up your own garters!"

Her dinner parties may well have added something over the years to the gaiety of a nation's long all-too-dreadly-parochial capital (like little London today), though she never wielded any political influence. She was a passable mimic, and more famous than she deserved for the faces she liked to pull. Eleanor with her teeth was a comely but easy target who heaped coals of fire on Alice, when with unerring bad taste she did her turn before F.D.R.'s guests in the White House, by murmuring, "Alice has a talent for that sort of thing." Her granddaughter's boyfriend rather cruelly decided that, when finally came the end which, like illness, she had always apprehended with a most unphilosophical dread, there should be recorded as her occupation on her death certificate "Gadfly". Having in her lifetime enjoyed her company in small doses, I would myself hesitate for an epitaph for her between her cousin Eleanor's earlier puritanical judgment, "too much ease, too much dependency, too much luxury, too many shots of her in mind, Shakespeare's 'The Poul Fend' Gilberteibet, who presides over moping and mowing." But I very much enjoyed Mr Teague's worthwhile exhumation and heartily applaud his excellently produced book and its most captivating illustrations.

The Greeks go West

By David Ridgway

EMILIO GABBA and GEORGES VALLET (Editors):
La Sicilia Antica
Two volumes.
780, 627pp. Società editrice Stora di Napoli del Mezzogiorno continentale e della Sicilia.

Two volumes divided into five parts and amounting to a total of 1,407 pages, all of which are slightly more than a foot high: is there really so much that can usefully be written about ancient Sicily? Having read the several hundred thousand words involved, I have no hesitation in replying "yes" and I applaud this enormous, limp issue of the "ancient" section of the publisher's full-scale *Storia della Sicilia*. I wish they had done the same with their *Storia di Napoli*, published some years ago; and I would also like to know more than I do about the prospect of a *Storia del Mezzogiorno continentale*. There, no less than in Sicily, information and the literature grow with dizzy speed - a stark warning to non-Italian readers which prefaced the first (and, alas, the last) review in English of new South Italian and Sicilian discoveries prepared by the late Martin Frederiksen in 1977.

It must be said at once, however, that these five tomes constitute very much less, and at the same time very much more, than a definitive "History of Ancient Sicily". They may best be described as a set of "Materials" for such a work, covering the period between the Lower Palaeolithic and the sixth century AD. The editors are to be congratulated on their smooth and efficient solution of the problems that inevitably arise when archaeologists and historians are expected to cooperate; and the very real hurdle of translation (a number of the contributions were originally written in French) has been cleared triumphantly.

Within the vast time-span represented, Sicily before the Greeks is disposed of in the first eighty-six pages; and only 153 pages are required by the island's artistic, literary and political developments between unification under Roman provincial rule in 211 BC and the beginning of the Byzantine period around 550 AD. The lion's share of the space available is thus allotted to the five centuries during which Sicilian affairs are traditionally held to be coloured - indeed determined - by the presence of Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians. This detailed, frankly disproportionate, attention to an externally defined period certainly coincides with most people's idea of Sicily, whether ancient, medieval or modern. After all, in the words of the current English-language publicity emitted by the Sicilian Regional Tourist Board, "Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Goths, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Spaniards and Austrians in turn conquered Sicily" - a list and an attitude which have their roots in Tommaso Fazello's *De Rebus Siculis*, first published in 1558 (and discussed here in an all too brief chapter by Arnaldo Momigliano on the rediscovery of ancient Sicily).

However this may be, I feel strongly that a new standard work might reasonably have been expected to offer a fuller reflection of the considerable recent advances made by pre- and proto-historians currently operating in Sicily. Unlike so many of their English-speaking counterparts, they have not yet found it expedient to render their story unfit for civilized company; and it is indispensable to a proper understanding of the ancient Mediterranean as a whole. Furthermore, and for obvious reasons, the findings of Iron Age archaeology in particular provide important information about the Sicily found by the Phoenicians and Greeks. The not infrequent references in the main part of this work to the material evidence for hellenization (and punification) would have gained much from a longer profile of the indigenous cultures in their pre-colonial state - and, incidentally, from more illustrations of their far from second-rate contributions to what the Tourist Board (rightly) calls a "unique heritage of art treasures".

It is simply not fair to allow historians to wrestle, virtually unaided, with the ancient written sources concerning the identity and affiliations of the non-Greek, non-Punic Sicilians and Sicels, respectively east and west of the Platani (Halycon), and the notoriously elusive Elymians in the north-west - to say nothing of the Italic "Ausonian" and "Morgetan" enclaves revealed by archaeology around Milazzo (Mylae) and Serra Orlando (Morgantina). On the other hand, after reading the rest of this work, and beginning to wonder whether ethnic problems are necessarily the most interesting ones now available for study.

This apparently heretical question is prompted by Parts Two and Three of Volume One, which together summarize the findings of a research programme on the Greek cities in Sicily, co-ordinated over more than a decade by four distinguished contributors. They are: Roland Martin (of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres), Paola Pelagatti and Giuseppe Voza (past and present Archaeological Superintendents of Eastern Sicily), and Georges Vallet (Director of the Ecole Française de Rome) - co-editor of these two volumes and for long doyen of the foreign archaeological community in Italy). The themes tackled in Part Two amount to a new and original urban structures in relation to history, civil and religious monumental architecture; domestic architecture; and, finally, the social and economic information that may legitimately be deduced from the study of cemeteries and of objects. The picture that is emerging - for, excitingly, this is no more than an interim statement - adds much to the late T. J. Dunbabin's bald statement that "some of the earliest big building and engineering works were Sicilian", and even more to his extraordinary affirmation that "the West has no place for fruitful political ideas."

From hunting to farming

By Lawrence Barfield

GRAEME BARKER:
Landscape and Society
Prehistoric Central Italy
281pp. Academic Press. £13.80.
0 12 078630 8

At first sight, the story of early man in the central Italian peninsula, before the emergence of Etruscan and Roman civilization, is hardly the most arresting of subjects. The prehistoric inhabitants of this region indeed seem to have been more isolated and conservative, and to have shown less initiative than their neighbours to the north and south. Graeme Barker, however, by applying to a somewhat drab collection of prehistoric finds a whole range of recently developed archaeological theory, techniques and interpretations, has produced a case-study from which students and professionals, in all fields of prehistory, can benefit.

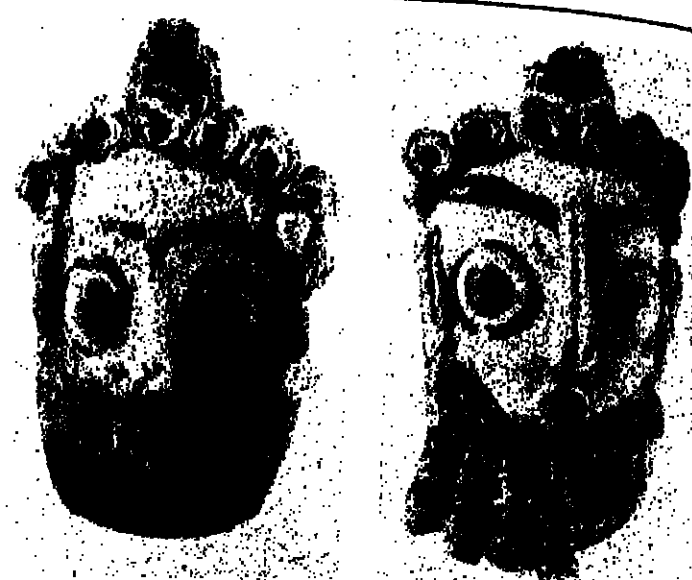
Landscape and Society deals with the development of human culture and the economy from the time of the first Palaeolithic hunters to that of the bronze-using communities of the second millennium BC. Less than a third of the book is devoted to the traditional stuff of prehistory - the description of chronology of material culture. Instead, the emphasis is on the economy and social organization, how and why the observed development and changes took place. Cultural development in prehistoric Italy,

Part Three contains an encyclopedic description of the individual Greek cities from Agrigento (Agrigento) to Zancle (Messina), and also of four massive hellenized centres (Sulunto, Monte Iato, Segesta and Morgantina). The entries are arranged under the following uniform headings, with additions and subtractions as required: history, town site, cemeteries, territory, coinage and essential bibliography. The excellent detailed plans provided of each site are perhaps the most important single feature of the whole work, and photographic coverage is generous in quantity and high in quality.

The combined effect of these two central parts is almost entirely positive. Almost, but not quite. Many of these 530 pages have commended themselves to me as the most informed and informative account of Greek material culture in Sicily currently available; and so they are, precisely because they do indeed incorporate *un sacco di inediti* - or, more prosaically, they make extensive use of material found in recent and not so recent excavations as yet not fully published. But this state of affairs is dangerous, and devalues the archaeological synthesis of Greek Sicily conceived on this impressive scale. We are more fortunate still to be able to integrate its findings with the contents of Volume Two, Part One, which is physically the largest of these five tomes. Here, the history of the period between the sixth century and 210 BC is narrated by Gianfranco Maddoli, Marta Sordi, Sebastiana Consolo Langher and Giovanna De Sensi Sestito. The literature of the same period is in the equally capable hands of Graziano Arghetti; and its art is reviewed by Giuseppe Voza (fifth century) and Filippo Coarelli (fourth and third centuries) - the former scholar is also responsible for prehistoric archaeology in Volume One, a fact that neatly illustrates the breadth of learning required in a modern Italian Archaeological Superintendency.

Here then is the most authoritative and accessible set of "Materials for a History of Ancient Sicily" that we have, or are likely to have for a very long time. These magnificent volumes are a tribute to the high standard of French scholarship abroad and of Sicilian scholarship at home. From them, ancient historians will learn much in the archaeological sections, and vice versa; Sicilians will learn much about the non-Sicilian world, and vice versa; and non-combatants will derive a great deal of innocent pleasure from the numerous encounters with the *Realien* of ancient society.

In this latter respect, I think for example of the bill of sale of a fourth-century house recently discovered at Camarina by Paola Pelagatti, and collated with its context in Roland Martin's chapter on domestic architecture. "Sostitutos" son of Theon purchases from Dion a house and its associated shops for the sum of forty talents, inclusive of all fixtures and of the party walls common to the neighbouring houses of Philoxenos and Thrasylos. Such details strike a chord to the extent that one wonders if the Western Greeks had words for English "gazump" and for Italian *equo canone*.



Pendants of human heads - others are of demons, satyrs and rams - reproduced and described in a chapter by Veronica A. Tatton-Brown in the Catalogue of Greek and Roman Glass in the British Museum. Volume 1: Core and Rod-Formed Vessels and Pendants and Mycenaean Cast Objects by Donald B. Harden (235pp. British Museum Publications, £45, 0 7141 1262 3); that on the left bluish-green with dark blue eyebrows and eyes, greenish-yellow hair and beard applied separately, from Olbia near the Black Sea; that on the right brownish-purple with white face and eyeballs but similar hair, beard, eyebrows and pupils.

momento (gloomily but universally translated as *sine die*).

In the circumstances, we are extremely fortunate to have an archaeological synthesis of Greek Sicily conceived on this impressive scale. We are more fortunate still to be able to integrate its findings with the contents of Volume Two, Part One, which is physically the largest of these five tomes. Here, the history of the period between the sixth century and 210 BC is narrated by Gianfranco Maddoli, Marta Sordi, Sebastiana Consolo Langher and Giovanna De Sensi Sestito. The literature of the same period is in the equally capable hands of Graziano Arghetti; and its art is reviewed by Giuseppe Voza (fifth century) and Filippo Coarelli (fourth and third centuries) - the former scholar is also responsible for prehistoric archaeology in Volume One, a fact that neatly illustrates the breadth of learning required in a modern Italian Archaeological Superintendency.

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it appears, was far less straightforward than the commonly presented account of hunter-gatherers (Palaeolithic and Mesolithic), followed by farmers invading from the east (Neolithic), warrior-herdsmen with more invasions - (Eneolithic), pastoralists (Early and Middle Bronze Age), ending up with farmers (Final Bronze Age). There was, often, in fact, considerable local variation in some so-called "cultures" were no more than the product of a regional or the Moustérien-Crean tradition, for example, remained limited by its employment of beach pebbles, as did the Rinaldone rock-out tombs by suitable geological sites.

Transition from one stage to the next, too, was less than clear-cut, since there were many instances of continuity. According to Barker, the traditional "chest-of-drawers" approach to the definition of prehistoric cultures, in which finds are neatly ascribed to each clearly defined stage, has only perpetuated its own fallacies. He perhaps goes too far in denying the usefulness of traditional groupings, for although the Italy during the "Neolithic", with several ceramic traditions coexisting (as is certainly the case in the Eneolithic over most of the peninsula) recent work in Northern Italy, contrary to what Barker maintains, shows that the Early and Middle Neolithic developed through a sequence of phases clearly defined by their own distinctive ceramic styles, which were not contemporary. This cultural approach may sometimes hinder interpretation, but equally cultures may be defined and used as

a basis for classification. Barker's own research has been primarily in the field of the prehistoric economy and he shows how the strong contrasts in climate and vegetation between the coastal plains, with their hot dry summers, and the cold winters on the high Apennines, imposed clear constraints. These extremes of climate meant that the most sensible regime for the pasturing of both wild and domesticated animals was one of migration/transhumance from coastal plain to the mountains in summer and back again in winter; which implies considerable mobility, for the early hunters - and the later herdsmen.

Barker maintains that human society, especially that of Central Italy, is basically conservative, so that any changes in cultural development, especially in the economy, must have resulted from stresses exerted from outside, or from within. He carefully examines many alternative models to explain the changes in the prehistoric sequence, while being well aware of the difficulties in reading the evidence. The traditional explanations of invasion and diffusion are whittled down, but not rejected entirely. In fact, he is now to be ruled out in the north, introducing agriculture to the south of Italy, though what happened in between remains unclear. The outstanding possibility of agriculture developed independently in Italy is raised, but not espoused. We just don't have enough evidence yet, Barker rejects invasions as an explanation for the emergence of the Eneolithic, where not even the changes in skull-type are sound

enough evidence for a change in population, but he does not go so far as some in denying the significance of similarities between Italy and the Aegean in the material culture of this period. On the whole, he favours Boserup's idea of population increase as a major factor in economic change, while admitting that this explanation involves a vicious circle. Social changes are even more difficult to identify than economic or technological ones, but should nevertheless be looked for. Again Barker rejects any simple, uniform progression of social organization up the scale from small band to segmentary tribe and chiefdom; and again he suggests that there were regional variations. During the Eneolithic, peoples in the south of the Gaudo culture may already have had a ranked social structure, while in Central Italy the regime remained fixed in the mould of the more democratic Neolithic period. Here Barker may be trying to read too much into the evidence. Why should the flint daggers and copper tools of the Eneolithic imply a different social structure from that of the Neolithic, when we find quality products, in the form of fine pottery, jade axes and bracelets and "spondylus" shell beads, already being traded as prestige items?

Barker is, on the whole, well aware of the difficulties of applying many of the new interpretations of the often very inadequate archaeological evidence, and the whole tone of his approach is sensibly cautious. This book will do much to blow away the cobwebs, and point to new directions for research and interpretation.

Acres and pains

By Ronald Blythe

JEAN STOVIN (Editor):
Journals of a Methodist Farmer
1871-1875
251pp. Croom Helm. £12.95.
0 7099 2324 4

The publication by Jean Stovin of her grandfather's journals, documents which have been consulted by agricultural historians for some time now, is a most welcome event. So often such nineteenth-century records are little more than a kind of briefly personalized set of farm accounts. Not so with Cornelius Stovin, whose intention was always to bring the profit and loss account of his fields, a huge tenancy of some 100 acres, to the point where it would receive the approval, not of old Sir Edmund Beckett, his landlord, but of Christ. Thus we have one of the most intimate and self-revealing of farmers' diaries, a book which throws an astonishing light across the mid-Victorian rural scene. The sight of one of those stiff little village chapels recalls not such matters as the Nonconformist conscience or vernacular architecture, but its God-enchanted priests, complex figures like Stovin who longed "to throw my farm into the treasury of Christ".

He did not succeed, of course. Confronted by an ill and down-to-earth wife, an implacable class system, which left him isolated in the neighbourhood, an outlook formed by an addiction to reading, and the first rumblings of the great disaster which was to ruin British farming for decades to come, Stovin was obliged to take the usual worldly measures. But during the four years covered by the *Journals*, the complexity resulting from the contrast between what he knew he should do, and what he was able to do, gave his life a dramatic edge which goes far beyond that which one associates with such an existence.

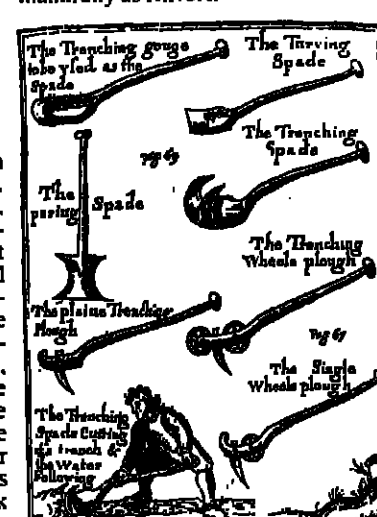
Stovin had farmed Binbrook Hall, Lincolnshire, for twenty years before he began writing about it. The whole of his youth had been spent in dragging it out of its stagnation and in perfecting his preaching. These two activities, his acres and his Methodistism, were for him an undivided path, which, by 1870, when he was forty, appeared at last to have become unified. Thus, when he begins his first

Journal during the harvest of 1871 (prompted perhaps by a pamphlet about Bunyan), he is all praise and confidence. Newly invented machinery speeds the field work. The weather is glorious. His wife and his foreman are - and here follow puny elegies fit for memorial stones. A lighted window at night gives a glimpse of a labourer and his wife at prayer. He has leisure for reading (his greatest passion) and is uncharacteristically absorbed in a novel, *Lothair*. His wife is poorly but "Never fail" is "written on her banner". As for his men, were there ever such workers? "The sheaves seemed almost to fly from the ground to the wagon and from the wagon to the stack." Mr Gladstone has made a just and powerful criticism of the landed interest.

But then all kinds of woes begin to emerge from the bud of holy toil. To the historian they are inevitable, and it is proof of Stovin's truthfulness and lack of self-deception that he notes down all the first small indications of a collapsing agricultural economy, combined with a subtle alteration in the thinking and attitude of its workers. To the writer, many of them must have seemed like peculiar, unrelated incidents; to the reader today they are vivid evidence of his sensitivity. During the winter of 1872, for example, two of his labourers come to the door to ask him to raise their wages just when he has been boasting that his kindness as an employer saved him from such an expense. One of the labourers gives notice and Stovin "came in the house confused with grief and consternation. I felt injured by his ingratitude. I considered and followed him into the yard. He softened in his manner but held firmly to his own terms." All over the country "they are forming themselves into organic companies for the purpose of dictating their own terms". This unnerving independence shown by his men highlights the "grossly servile prostration" of tenant farmers like himself before absentee sporting landlords who are putting up the rent. He feels deserted by both sides, which indeed he is.

The *Journals* continue with Stovin struggling hard to correct the social and economic forces which are wrecking the imbalance at Binbrook. Parallel with this is a transparently honest description of many of the accounts of equally acknowledged fulfilment. Although his men "seem to have set

their forces like flint against work" and "are advancing in intelligence and folding their arms simultaneously", although the farmhouse is damp and badly run due to Mrs Stovin's sickness ("the world had proved a very sharp grindstone to her"), although weeds and Sir Edmund's coverts diminish his crops and his waggons are singing, not the glories of Zion but obscure songs in the yard and, most frightening of all, although, despite all his efforts, by 1876 he is in debt to the tune of £1,635, he is as capable in his way of responding to the countryside as thankfully as Kilvert.



Early seventeenth-century English plough forms, reproduced from Our Forgotten Past: Seven Centuries of Life on the Land, edited by Jerome Blum (240pp, with 256 illustrations, £12.50, 0 500 25080 4) to be published by Thames and Hudson on March 29.

Where there's muck

By Kenneth Mellanby

FRASER HARRISON:
Strange Land
The Countryside, Myth and Reality
133pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £7.95.
0 283 98838 X

Fraser Harrison differs from the many writers who deplore the changes in agricultural practice which have so damaged our wildlife, as well as the effects of modern industrialized farming on the appearance of much of rural Britain. He admits that the landscape which reached its climax in the Edwardian era, as the cumulative effect of the enclosures and other developments in the previous two centuries, was beautiful, and that we are right to deplore the destruction of many of its features. But he insists that this beauty was corrupt, and that it was produced as a result of the sufferings of the rural poor. The countryside, he says, was run for the benefit of a tiny number of agrarian capitalists who still exercise a predominant and stultifying influence on rural life. He believes that we must acknowledge this before we can produce something better.

Harrison goes on to make his case in an unusual way. He describes his childhood on his grandfather's progressive Welsh farm, though as a young man he seems to have taken no interest in the countryside, in farming or in wildlife. This is a damning admission, for as a rule those who become progressive conservationists as adults were obsessed with animals and plants from their earliest childhood. It is therefore difficult not to doubt the reality of this author's feeling for the countryside.

We are next given a description of the Suffolk village in which Fraser Harrison now lives; he makes it seem a horrible place, of which he is not a part. This description is followed by a long chapter on the pig, described in the blurb as "a metaphor of the natural processes of growth which are commonplace in an agricultural society". This may be the intention; it is not communicated to the reader.

Following the flow

By Alwyne Wheeler

ANTHONY BURTON:
The Changing River
158pp. Gollancz. £9.95.
0 575 02967 6

There can be few people who do not like rivers. Perhaps it is an elemental part of man's nature that invests a river with a quality which arrests attention and leads us "to stand and stare", be it ever so briefly. Even the signs naming the rivers that one traverses on the motorway bring brief glimpses of sanity and a natural world to counteract the thunder of tyres and surfeit of adrenalin. Further pleasure lies in the vast number of books about rivers and the place they hold in memory: these include the writings of Kenneth Grahame and Jerome K. Jerome.

Anthony Burton has contributed most nobly to this literature. His theme is the role that rivers have played in the development of society in Britain, but within this there are many delightful sketches and accounts of individual rivers, some followed from their source to their mouth. The relationship between rivers and early human habitations in Britain is indisputable - so many early sites are beside rivers or watery localities. The important Mesolithic site at Star Carr in Yorkshire of perhaps 9,500 years ago was on a swampy site at the head of the River Derwent, though this is at variance with Burton's suggestion that the earliest settlement was in the uplands not in the river valleys.

Burton elegantly provides information on many aspects of river life and development during the Middle Ages by reference to the numerous riverine characters in the *Canterbury Tales*: the Knight whose fortress can be supposed often to have guarded the bridge or ford crossing of a river; the Prioress, Monk and Friar whose establishments were sited beside rivers for the sake of peace and seclusion, for power for the mill, or the grazing on the flood plains; and the Miller who depended on flowing water for his power.

Later centuries were to see rivers become major thoroughfares for the carriage of goods, and gradually to be tamed by flesh locks, pound locks, and dams for power. Eventually industry was attracted to the river bank, first for the sake of the power it offered, then for its cooling capacities (some electricity generating stations still cool their turbines with river water). Examples like the silk mills of the River Derwent at Derby, the cotton mills of the Derwent, and the textile area of Lancashire, all depended on flowing river water but the making of whisky is as much a river-side industry as any of these more industrial processes and Mr Burton dwells lovingly on its production.

The Changing River presents a bird's-eye view of Britain's history related to its rivers. Bridges, navigation, fishing, mills, drinking water, sewage disposal, shipbuilding, industry, are all described in sufficient detail to sketch in the broad picture without obscuring the story with over-emphasis. This is both a delightful and an informative book for river-lovers and shows the author's wide knowledge of and fascination by flowing water.

whose main impression is of the apparent pleasure taken by the author in denigrating the police force, which is seen as deserving the epithets "pigs" and "the filth". Even our domestic poultry do not escape, and there is a curious play on words, where "fowl" is equated with "foul": an exercise which owes little to etymology.

The final chapter of *Strange Land*, entitled "Beyond Despair", might be expected to sum up the argument; and enunciate plans for saving the countryside for the people. In fact, we have a sermon on the virtues of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a naive account of the horrors of nuclear war, and a general condemnation of NATO. While I fully share the author's concern at the horrific potential of nuclear weapons, it is hard to see how this ties in with the rest of the text. Next we are given some familiar data regarding the exhaustion of global resources, and of the damage caused by technology to world ecology, including

statements such as that, as a result of the loss of tropical forests, our oxygen supply would be so reduced that mankind would perish from "universal asphyxia". Of course the loss of the Amazonian forests is a tragedy, particularly the extinction of so many unrecorded species of plants and animals, with the damage to delicate soils and to the human populations; but fortunately oxygen deficiency is one of the least likely results.

Fraser Harrison is almost entirely destructive, with few practical suggestions for the genesis of a countryside of "cooperative creativity". There are some ill-directed swipes at modern farming, but no practical ideas for its reformation. This is perhaps because the author, as his childhood memories illustrate, is not really involved in rural problems, but only in political extrapolations based on his peculiar interpretations of how the traditional British landscape developed, and what is happening to it today.

Valued Environments

Edited by John Gold and Jacquelin Burgess

People care about places. Local inhabitants demand more participation in the changes proposed for their environments; activists urge greater protection of the countryside and natural environments; planners and decision-makers feel threatened by the antagonism aroused by their powers and plans. The contributors to this book investigate why we place such value on our local landscape in both town and country.

Contributors: Jacquelin Burgess, John Gold, Brian Goodey, Marion Shoard, David Lowenthal, John V. Punter, Stephen Daniels, Katharine A. Oliver, Susan Ann Lee, Derek R. Hall, David L. Uzzell.

Publication date: April 29th 1982
224 pp 0 047100001 X Hardback £15.00

George Allen & Unwin

George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd
PO Box 18 Park Lane,
Hemel Hempstead Herts HP2 4TE TLS 3631

The floral and the formal

By Anthony Huxley

MARTYN RIX:

The Art of the Botanist
244pp, with 64 colour and 250 black-and-white illustrations. Lutterworth.
£30.
0 7188 2482 2

Curtis's Flower Garden Displayed
120 Plates from the years 1787-1807
with new descriptions by Tyler Whittie
and Christopher Cook
258pp. Oxford University Press.
£19.50.
0 19 217715 X

The science of botany began, according to Martyn Rix, in the fourth century BC with Aristotle, followed by Theophrastus and Pliny the Elder. Less well known are Crataevus (often rendered as Krateus), Dionysius and Metrodorus. These three illustrated their works, and despite imperfections in their paintings, which Pliny criticized, they effectively began the

great tradition of technical plant illustration. Drawings by Crataevus were freely copied, and became attached to the writings of Dioscorides, who was a doctor in the Roman army during the first century AD. His *De Materia Medica* is the greatest antique influence on botany and herbalism, and his work became, to quote the seventeenth-century herbalist Thomas Johnson, "as it were the foundation and groundwork of all that has been delivered in this nature".

The oldest existing manuscript of Dioscorides' writings is the Codex Vindobonensis, existing in a copy made from the original in 512 for the daughter of the Emperor Flavianus. The illustrations are naturalistic rather than in the Byzantine style, and are hence presumed to be based on Crataevus; they thus form the link between the lost botanical illustrations of ancient Greece and those of modern Europe.

Copying or adaptation of both text and illustrations was usual in early herbal publications, and many draw-

ings became so formalized as to be unrecognizable; but occasionally new ones were made. A famous example of this is in an early twelfth-century Anglo-Saxon manuscript version of the herbal of "Pseudo-Apuleius", in which paintings of English flowers, not always relevant to the text, have replaced the Crataevus-inspired renderings of Mediterranean plants. In medieval times came the beautifully observed floral decorations (among others) of religious works - illustrated prayer-books and Books of Hours - and a little later painters began to introduce accurately depicted flowers into their work, often for symbolic purposes. Albrecht Dürer's "Large Piece of Turf", reproduced in this book, is one of the great examples of plants painted for their own sake.

It is not really clear why Dr Rix has included, in a chapter entitled "Nature Observed", examples of flower painting which do not really fit in with his theme of botanical illustrations. At the least he should have given more than passing men-

tion to the plant representations, in fresco and relief, from ancient Egypt, and the marvellous realistic decorative work on pottery and in frescoes of the Minoan civilization, which take us back to nearly 2000 BC, and all pre-date Crataevus. Nor does Rix touch on the beauties of Islamic flower paintings, which parallel those of the few European painters he brings in.

Not until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries did the recording of plants in a systematic way really start, and this primary aspect of real botany gave rise to work often of the most meticulous detail. The major part of this volume is devoted to true botanical illustration and its greatest exponents. Some of these travelled with botanists, like Ferdinand Bauer with John Sibthorp, sometimes losing their lives as a result, as did Sir Joseph Banks's artist, Sydney Parkinson. Some of the greatest botanical artists, however, like Georg Ehret; never ventured far from home.

Rix traces early plant explorations all over the world and their results in botanical illustration, from which in the late eighteenth century came the first reasonably comprehensive illustrated floras. The final part of his book examines the triumph of lithography over other methods of reproduction and the resulting explosion of illustrated botanical works in the nineteenth century, a most interesting summary. He then touches briefly on the subsequent botanical exploration of India and other distant countries, examines monographs on single genera, the most famous of which are Redouté's *Les Roses* and *Les Lilacées*, and rather skimpily, with virtually no reproduction of their work, mentions some twentieth-century illustrators.

The Art of the Botanist is an admirable presentation of the subject with the proverbial feast of splendid and varied plant illustrations - not perhaps as many in colour as one might greedily wish for, but those there are well chosen and very well reproduced, though not always closely related to the text. The large format allows these to be displayed to advantage, which they could not be in Wilfrid Blunt's *The Art of Botanical Illustration*, one of the early New Naturalist titles (1950), which

is the only other major work on the subject. The index, alas, is inadequate.

One of the works mentioned by Rix is William Curtis's *Botanical Magazine*. Between 1775 and 1782 Curtis had published *Flora Londinensis*, a lavishly illustrated series intended to include all wild plants growing within ten miles of London. As Tyler Whittie explains (while consistently mispelling *Londinensis* in his introduction to *Curtis's Flower Garden Displayed*, this almost ruined Curtis, but he went on to the book and at once profitable idea of a regular magazine in which the latest botanical discoveries would be described and pictured. It was, as he wrote in the first issue of February 1787, to be a "Display of the Flower Garden of ornamental Foreign plants cultivated in the open ground, the greenhouse, and the stove (hot-house)".

The Bot. Mag., as everyone calls it, has remarkably enough been issued ever since (it is now under the aegis of Kew Gardens), and a full run is now worth a small fortune. The two present editors have selected 1200 plates from the Magazine's first twenty years, arranging them in chronological order of the plants' introduction to cultivation in Britain; and they inevitably form a very random selection. The first half, for example, are *Clusia canus* (which Christopher Cook manages to misspell in his preface on plant-naming on the previous page), *Lilium candidum*, *Ornithogalum nutans*, *Althaea rosea*, *Syringa vulgaris* and *Jasminum officinale*. These are many other well-known garden plants, often the first introductions of their kind, like the Pontic rose *Rhododendron* and *Lahryns odora*, progenitor of the sweet pea.

The editors have rewritten the original text descriptions of each plant to ensure that taxonomic and cultural details are up to date, and these are perhaps the best feature of the book. The pictures themselves can only be called good run-of-the-mill depictions, nowhere ascending to the level of art where Dr Rix quite properly places the best of botanical illustrations.

Sylvan species

By Scott Leathart

HEATHER AND ROBIN TANNER:

Woodland Plants
215pp. Robin Garton. £21.
0 906030 17 X

In this beautifully written and exquisitely illustrated book sixty-nine species of plants which grow beneath the trees are shown and discussed; not in the analytical manner of the botanist, but by an artist who, by attention to patiently observed detail and skilful arrangement of his subjects, has made flowers look alive in black and white; and by a writer whose love of plants and the woodlands in which they grow has made each description a little biography rather than an entry in *Who's Who*.

Engravings of winter aconites and snowdrops are followed by pictures of daffodils and bluebells, all of which appear anxious to use the light filtering through the leafless canopy to fuel growth in the next late-winter cold. Primroses, which seem to choose clearings, seem to rise from the sun's rays find entry even when the trees are in full leaf, are shown to rise from rosettes of crumpled leaves, and wood anemones spread in constellations around dark tree boles. Some orchids are also described; especially the early purple orchid which seeks to flower on the woodland edges where light and shade are equally at hand. Summer flowers, which range from creeping jenny to rosebay willowherb, are all represented.

In an epilogue Heather Tanner, an eager, loving, observant and plants. The drawings by Robin Tanner, which accompany his wife's descriptive prose, show that he has not allowed his feelings as an artist to override the need for accurate attention to detail.

presses concern about the future of our deciduous woods. Most of them are planted and managed as sources of productive timber and exist because they are so. Yet the plants of the woodland floor still grow in the same way as they do in the primeval forests. They appear, proliferate and decrease to be replaced by others, and regenerate later as silvicultural operations alter their surroundings. Most deciduous woodlands are now managed on a selection system, with no clear felling pattern. Individual trees or small groups are felled when they reach maturity, and the gaps are filled by planting or by the encouragement of natural seedlings. This provides a woodland of trees of uneven age, as well as the locally changing conditions which favour successive plant communities. Nature reserves and special sites will be used to protect the rarer plants, but the most successful and thus the most numerous and best-known species, such as those assembled in the pages of this book, will be under no threat if this sort of forest regime continues to be practised. Paradoxically, the apparent threat to woodlands from the large and growing demand for firewood may well be the cause of their increase; for an ancient system of coppice is an ideal method of producing firewood quickly and provides perfect habitat for most woodland plants.

It is clear that Heather Tanner is an eager, loving, observant and plants. The drawings by Robin Tanner, which accompany his wife's descriptive prose, show that he has not allowed his feelings as an artist to override the need for accurate attention to detail.

FICTION

Among feather-brains Life with a capital L

By Frank Tuohy

JAKOV LIND:

Travels to the Enu
126pp. Eyre Methuen. £6.50.
0 413 46780 5

Travels to the Enu, Jakov Lind's first novel to be written in English, is described by his publishers as a "funny and fantastic satire on modern European life", and it is dedicated to "all seafaring travellers into unknown waters, above all to our Master, Jonathan Swift." Claims like these encourage the reader to pull up his socks; even to get out his disbeliever's suspenders, dated and frayed though they may be, from the back of the drawer.

Jakov Lind's command of English is impressive though not impeccable. A native speaker would not have referred to "lapidary wisecracks". Like Vladimir Nabokov and Joseph Conrad, he makes use of the word "pal" (though not "chum") - which must reflect some felt inadequacy in our language. Where the dialogue sounds peculiar ("Cut the shit, you alien devil") he has at least the excuse that it is being spoken by the half-human species he has invented. Of his powers of invention there can be no doubt.

Orlando, the narrator, signs up for a cheap cruise on the SS Katherine Medici, a true *Narrenschild* whose surly and rebellious crew, gluts of food and periods of famine, mutinies and piracies, make her into an image of economic life as we know it. The ship blows up and our hero thinks, wrongly as it turns out, that he alone has survived to tell the tale.

Once on shore he is surrounded by the Enu, monstrous painted creatures whose heads are crowned with arrangements of hair which turn out to be birds' nests. Each Enu, according to his rank, is attended by a bird which acts as a "feathered supergo", an exteriorized conscience. Since, however, the rules of Enu society are extremely complicated, the birds and flamingoes, vultures, and other fowl are used as images of a hierarchical system. The sea is tabu to the Enu, and Orlando and the other survivors who turn up are denied the chance to build a boat. Instead they are transported to a city in the interior where Enu civilization is described in detail (mostly scatological, as with Lind's mentor Swift) and compared by implication with our own.

Modern European life offers rather too broad a target. Swift's contemporaries regarded themselves as highly civilized: he told them they stank. Orwell's *Animal Farm* was rejected because it went against current orthodoxy. Jakov Lind's imagination is in good order, his fable is intelligent and enjoyable. He has, unlike other younger writers, earned his pessimism. But he may be telling us something we already know.

Empty spaces

By Peter Kemp

JANET ROBOUSE:

Nellie Without Hugo
192pp. Cape. £6.95.
0 224 01969 4

Singular broodings about marriage make up most of *Nellie Without Hugo*. Its main characters - a mother and three daughters - rarely think or speak of anything else. And, in a fairly schematic way, they demonstrate differing attitudes to it.

Louisa, the mother, has throughout her life been lustreously dependent on men. "Singleness for women", she believes, "is only a temporary state". For years, the eldest girl, Rebecca, has seemed to disprove this. A glamorous career woman with "astounding white thighs" and a flat like "an Arab brother", she has stayed emotionally independent, casually enjoying "independent work" but committed only to her sex. Now, approaching forty, she decides to move into a permanent relationship. Travelling the other way is Sara, the youngest girl. A quivering refugee from marital disaster, she has just returned to her mother's home, forlornly seeking asylum in the single life.

With its endless discussions of "space", the book leaves little room

with fables like *Travels to the Enu* there is a conflict between the writer's concerns and those of his readers. The writer is fuelled by his own ideas or obsessions, but his readers are less interested in disentangling an allegory than in finding images which have a strong imaginative authority. This, of course, is what has happened with Swift.

There are two contemporary observations about *Gulliver's Travels* that people remember. One was made, I believe, by an Irish bishop, who said that, frankly, he didn't believe a word of it. The other was that, once you had thought of big people and little people, everything else followed. Episcopalian credulity aside, Swift's triumph is in being both persuasive and ironic at the same time. As a result, everyone remembers the cattle from Lilliput "a-grazing on a bowling green at Greenwich where the fineness of the grass made them feed very heartily." This was the result of his following out his own rules. Where the invention becomes too elaborate, as in the voyage to Laputa, he is usually less successful.

Fables and fantasies differ from ordinary fiction because they break what we think of as the laws of nature. But there should be as few breakages as possible. Kafka's *Metamorphosis* depends on one only: Gregor Samsa turns into a beetle and everything else follows (that is why it is disquieting when Nabokov tells us that beetles can't open and close their eyes, as Samsa does).

Travels to the Enu suffers from an absence of ground rules. Where reality could be easily established, it is ignored. The Enu were visited by a Portuguese explorer, but he writes incorrect Spanish: they were taught English, including recent slang, by two "newly-wed socialites" whose plane crashed there in 1937, and who were friends of D. H. Lawrence and Frieda. And who could walk about with the weight of a flamingo or a vulture on his head? Here, powerful vision collapses into arbitrary fantasy.

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By Richard Brown

OLIVER ST JOHN GOGARTY:

Tumbling in the Hay
302pp. Sphere Books. Paperback.
£1.75.
0 7221 3917 9

Oliver St John Gogarty's best claim to immortality rests in Joyce's picture of him as the wild and irreverent medical student Buck Mulligan in *Ulysses*. It was a picture that annoyed him on its appearance in 1922, when he was a successful middle-aged doctor, but perhaps some doubt may be cast on the malice that he, and many subsequent readers, have seen in Joyce's caricature. In the first pages of *Ulysses* Mulligan holds the centre of the stage. He shaves and gets dressed, skips merrily about the tower, makes breakfast and prepares for his early morning dip. Stephen, meanwhile, is brooding, inactive, and quick to take offence, lapses into long passages of grisly, self-conscious interior monologue at the slightest provocation. Mulligan certainly gets all the funniest lines, and it is his irreverent humour that is, for many readers, the most immediately accessible part of the book.

It's not such a bad thing to be as energetic and as funny as Joyce makes Buck Mulligan; and the most lasting parts of Gogarty's own literary work are those that live up to Joyce's version of him. In choosing, as he did in *Tumbling in the Hay*, to write amusingly about the years when he was a medical student, Gogarty shows little real desire to shake himself out of the Buck Mulligan mode.

The novel is all one would expect it to be: a carefree, roistering jaunt through the Dublin pubs, pawnshops and brothels, the sporting adventures and the lecture-rooms and hospitals that go towards a medical education. Typically, the title of the novel refers not to a bucolic Lawrenceian *locus amoenus* but to the spectacle of some female acrobatics in a place of uncertain reputation: Dublin's Hay Hotel.

Many of the incidents narrated are striking scenes like this one, or anecdotes that have an intrinsic interest and would stand on their own as spoken tales. There is a splendid account, for example, of a sardonic Professor of Medicine, who with a perfectly straight face, diagnoses a harmless red mark on a patient's knee as *erythema rous fugax non nodosum* before a group of credu-

lous, nodding students. Gogarty's own feats as a racing cyclist make good material too, and the *Boys Own* heroism should be added, along with the comic-surreal bicycles of Flann O'Brien's *Third Policeman*, to the significant body of Irish work on the theme of the bicycle. Gogarty was obviously proud of his exuberant youth, and is adept at bringing its most memorable moments to life.

Students of Joyce have the opportunity to get a real sense of the atmosphere of Dublin at the time in which *Ulysses* is set. *Tumbling in the Hay* is a mine of relevant background details (Joyce himself gets a brief look in as "Kinch", though there is no attempt at a vengeful caricature of any length). They would be well advised to look at Gogarty's versions of incidents in the Holess Street Maternity Hospital and Dublin's "Monto" district, which have obvious parallels with the "Oxen of the Sun" and "Circe" episodes of *Ulysses*.

Great literary importance, though, it lacks, and for a book first published in the same year that Yeats died and Joyce published *Finnegans Wake*, it seems old-fashioned and parochial. It is interesting to note that Gogarty is becoming a favourite with biographers, with studies now published by Ulick O'Connor, James Carens and J. B. Lyons. Perhaps this is because, even in his own work, he appears more as a rich and entertaining character than as one of the shapers of the literature of his time.

By T. O. Treadwell

CARTER WILSON:

Treasures on Earth
245pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.
0 7181 2105 8

Treasures on Earth is a historical novel based on a real event, the expedition to Peru in 1911 led by the Yale historian and archaeologist Hiram Bingham, which culminated in the discovery of Machu Picchu, the lost city of the Incas. In Carter Wilson's book, though, archaeological adventure is kept well in the background; the exploration that interests the author is internal and personal.

Willie Hickler, the (fictional) hero, is a New Haven photographer brought to Peru ostensibly to take pictures for the expedition but really to provide drinking companionship for Bingham, an old friend. Willie is thirty-two and unhappily conscious of a homosexuality which he is too diffident to express physically. On arriving in Peru, he falls in love with Ernesto Mena, a native of Cuzco employed as a guide for the expedition. His love, it seems, is consummated, but as time passes Ernesto grows colder and, against the backdrop of the great discovery, Willie acknowledges the hopelessness of his passion and prepares to return to the United States.

A simple story in outline, but Wilson gives it depth by adding further historical dimensions. The novel intermittently flashes forward to 1926, by which time Willie is living in middle-aged domestic contentment with a part-Danish schoolmaster. More interestingly, it also flashes back in Willie's imagination to the original confrontation between Indian and European at the time of the conquistadors.

The starting-point for this reverie in *An Account of the Conquest of the Empire called Peru* by the Spanish friar Carlos Zárate, published in Spain in 1534. Zárate was one of the three Spaniards sent by Pizarro to take an inventory of the treasures of the Inca city of Cuzco, and his book is chiefly an account of the marvels he found there. Unlike other early writers, though, Zárate makes frequent and grateful mention of his Inca guide, a young man christened Martín, and Willie imagines, in lubricious detail, a love-affair between them. The conqueror is conquered; Zárate and Martín share a blissful day in Cuzco, but at length the friar is summoned back to Pizarro and finally, broken-hearted, to Spain.

"That Willie is imposing his own fantasies on history is clear enough, as are the implications of his musings. The coarse and vigorous Americans are the new conquistadors, rough intruders into a fragile and gentle civilization which they despoil not of its gold but of its past. Willie the photographer, recorder of what's there with neither desire nor art to alter it, finds amid the scenes of conquest the ability to love.

Historical novels often use the past merely to provide a sort of retrospective local colour. Carter Wilson is more ambitious than this; his novel relates its setting in various historical periods to its thematic concerns. Where it is much less successful is in realizing these settings imaginatively.

No attempt to create historically convincing dialogue is made. This is perhaps just as well, because when Wilson does try to reproduce the diction of the period the results are embarrassing. "Come speak for me, old man. Pizarro or no, what's his real love, what's the g.d. diff?"

The characters of the novel suffer from the same imaginative crudeness. Hiram Bingham (1875-1956), a New England patrician who succeeded from a distinguished career at Yale to be Governor of Connecticut and a member of the US Senate, cannot conceivably be confused with the beery sentimentalist who bears his name in *Treasures on Earth*, while the shadowy mistress with whom Wilson endows him seems to have wandered into the novel by mistake. The story of Willie's discovery, through his suffering, of the possibility of happiness is at least potentially moving, but the clumsiness with which it is packaged gets fatally in the way.

Obscenity observed

By John Buxton

ROBERT THORNTON:

The Temple of Flora
111pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£18.50.
0 297 77984 2

The Temple of Flora, the most famous collection of coloured plates of flowers ever assembled, was intended by its only begetter, Dr Robert Thornton, "to exceed all the other works of a similar nature on the Continent, and to be a National Honour". No doubt it is significant of the way in which we now prize ourselves out of every market that this latest edition of Thornton's book has been printed in Italy. Only so could a book with thirty-two colour plates and twenty-five black-and-white illustrations, all very well reproduced, be sold for a comparatively modest price: the Oxford English Texts edition of a work known to Thornton, James Thomson's *The Seasons*, which has four black-and-white illustrations and was also published in 1981, is priced at £45.

The introduction, by the former Secretary of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, is satisfyingly informative, both about Thornton and about the scientific context of a book which formed part of *A New Illustration of*

the *Sexual System of Carolus von Linnaeus*. Modern taxonomy and nomenclature derive from the tenth edition (1768) of Linnaeus' *Systema Naturae*. Sexuality in plants was first recognized in 1676, by Sir Thomas Millington, but it was some years before the system was understood, and many more before it was generally accepted. Linnaeus' analogies of vegetable loves with human were treated (quite properly) with scepticism but also (less properly) with disgust. The first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* claimed it as "a certain fact, that obscenity is the very basis of the Linnaean system", and at the time of the publication of *The Temple of Flora* a future bishop wrote to the founder of the Linnaean Society in London to inform him that "a literal translation of the first principle of Linnaean botany is enough to shock female modesty". Not surprisingly, the modesty of royal females, for Queen Charlotte and her daughters braved the shock with sufficient resolution to study the depraved new science; and to her Thornton dedicated his book.

Thornton, who was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and Guy's Hospital, was a well-read and cultivated man as well as being a doctor of some distinction. He supported Edward Jenner in his claims for the effectiveness of inoculation against smallpox, and in 1802, while occupied with *The Temple of Flora*, published *Facts Decisive in Favour of the Cow Pock*. He was also a good

artist and the one plate which he himself designed, Plate VI, "Roses", was the most popular of all - and not only because of the subject, for the treatment is most accomplished. The inclusion of a pair of nightingales with their nest and eggs was prompted by a poem of Hafiz, which Thornton quotes along with one of the Anacreontes, and others by Sappho, Catullus, Mathew Prior, George Dyer and lesser poets.

His great ambition to produce a botanical work to surpass all others was fulfilled, but in achieving it he had spent the whole of his modest inheritance, and was forced to have recourse to "A Royal Botanical Lottery" in 1813. 20,000 tickets were put on sale at two pounds five shillings each, and there were to be 10,000 prizes. Unfortunately for Thornton, just at the same time when he was commissioning and publishing his plates there had been a great diminution in the number of introductions of new plants to Kew, largely due to the Napoleonic wars, when a system of convoy greatly extended the length of time that plants had to spend on board ship. But beyond this, there was a transfer of public interest from botany to chemistry, led by Sir Humphry Davy. Even Sir Joseph Banks, who had sailed with Cook, admitted to a collector in Australia, "I cannot say that botany seems to be quite as fashionable as it used to be". His letter was dated August 1, 1808, the year after Thornton's book went to press.

The coloured photographs grouped in the centre of the book run the gamut of historical styles, starting with early formal gardens, though these are a little disappointing. Drummond Castle, Tyside may have the largest parterre in Britain, but in the photograph it lacks the mysterious quality that old gardens have for us. Old planting has been recreated in both the Queen's garden at Kew and in the walled garden at Rebrigg Hall, Norfolk; likenesses of these two gardens would have been more interesting. It is less colourful.

There is a dramatic photograph of the spectacular Powis Castle, and there are two gracious landscapes, Studley Royal and Stourhead. After these, plantmanship gets under way in the disquieting plant and soft tones of the Jekyll/Lutyens garden at Hestercombe. The cool pebble garden at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington is simple and elegant. The modern gardens shown are, curiously, angular, except for a pretty Japanese one in Alabama.

It is pleasing, though surprising, that some garden history, very much the fashion at the moment, should have been slipped into Huxley's otherwise severely practical encyclopedia. The words "maze", "parterre", "labyrinth", "avenue", "allée", "glade", the author scope to expound on Tudor gardens, French

the complicated flower-heads are depicted in sharp diagrams. In the course of the *Encyclopaedia* Mr Huxley gives us plenty of useful instructions, expressed in workmanlike prose. If we look up the word "rabbits" we find the best method to keep away these intolerable creatures. He gives us generous information about weedkillers, compost, fertilizers and pesticides. Much of the book is taken up with useful practical advice, how to make rock gardens or raised beds, to double-dig, to train cordon fruit trees. On most pages there are small explanatory drawings. They are clean-lined and attractive but there could be more of them. "Bonsai", "cactus", "island beds", "root-kutting" and many more terms could have been clarified a little better with accompanying drawings.

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Help for the horticulturalists

By Ruth Isabel Ross

ANTHONY HUXLEY:

The Penguin Encyclopedia of Gardening
373pp. Allen Lane. £9.95.
0 7139 1141 7

This unpretentious book will be helpful both for gardeners - or rather, novice gardeners - and for amateur botanists. Gardening correspondents in full spate forget that intelligent but inexperienced readers take fright when they see words and phrases like "drywall", "mulch", "friable", "green manure" and "catch crop". Anthony Huxley explains them well. Botanical terms are made intelligible too. I looked up that dreadful four-some "corymb", "raceme", "panicle" and "umbel" and found them all listed in plain, understandable, but

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Putting people into places

By Arnold Beichman

G. CALVIN MACKENZIE:
The Politics of Presidential
Appointments
298pp. Collier Macmillan. £10.95.
0 02 919670 1

The creating of a new government after a national election, particularly after an incumbent government has been ousted, always poses a problem. Within the past few years, elections in five Western democracies - Britain, Canada, the United States, France and Sweden - have voted opposition parties into power. In four of the countries, the transition was fairly simple and caused little stir - except, perhaps, in France because of President Mitterrand's inclusion of four Communists in the government. But as the French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson told President Reagan in June, when he moved into the Quai d'Orsay: "All the people were in place, and I just got down to work." One could almost hear the envious sigh as President Reagan said to Cheysson: "Well, you're a lucky man."

It is only in the United States, where the power of appointment is shared between the President and the Senate, that the process of changing administrations not infrequently results in debate, confrontation, investigation, and sometimes intense drama. The nomination of Bert Lance in the early days of the Carter Administration was a case in point. So was the recent affair of Ernest Soever, named by President Reagan as Assistant Secretary of State. Both nominations were withdrawn when it became apparent that the Senate would not confirm the nominees.

G. Calvin Mackenzie, in his excellently researched study, lists a number of reasons for this state of affairs. Firstly, when a nomination is sent up from the White House to the Senate, and thence to the appropriate Senate committee for its recommendation back to the full Senate, the ensuing public hearing is an ideal opportunity for Senators to air their grievances about Administration policy. The Lefever imbroglio (which occurred after the publication of the present volume in the United States) was a way of telling President Reagan how some Senators felt about the new Administration's views on human rights.

Another reason is that apart from specialists in a given field or a special interest group, most Presidents appoint people nobody has ever heard of, even though the qualifica-

tions and talents of such appointees may be extraordinarily high. Hugo Heclo's book about American politics was well named: *A Government of Strangers*. President Reagan's entire Cabinet, with the exception of General Haig, was unheard of prior to its nomination. The same is true of most of Carter's appointees. It wasn't considered at all odd (although it turned out to be quite funny) that Hamilton Jordan, one of Carter's closest advisers, should glory in the unknowns to be appointed in 1976.

If, after the inauguration, you find a Cy Vance as Secretary of State, and Zbigniew Brzezinski as head of national security, then I would say we failed. And I'd quit. But that's not going to happen. You're going to see new faces, new ideas. The government is going to be run by people you have never heard of.

(In the event, both Vance and Brzezinski were appointed, the Carter Administration did fail and Jordan didn't quit in protest. Still there were a great many new faces, even though there weren't shining new ideas.)

It is not unusual for a President to appoint someone to his Cabinet whom he has never met. Such was the case, for example, with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, and President Kennedy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk. It is quite customary for the new Cabinet members of an incoming Administration to meet for the first time at their swearing-in ceremonies or at the first Cabinet session. American newspapers often have great difficulty in preparing those potted biographical "profiles" about the new appointees, simply because their "morgues" have so few cuttings about them. As Mackenzie points out, "Administrations are constructed after Presidents are elected, not before."

In addition, Presidential candidates, for all the years of campaigning leading up to their election, don't really know many people outside their immediate circle. President Kennedy once said: "I thought I knew everybody but it turned out I only knew a few politicians." His personnel adviser, Dan Fenn Jr., used an acronym, "BOGSA" to describe the earlier White House recruitment system, meaning "a bunch of guys sitting around a table" asking each other, "Whom do you know?" President Nixon's personnel officer, a man with no experience, sent out a form letter to all 80,000 people listed in *Who's Who in America* asking them to recommend candidates for appointments. Some 60,000 replies were received; each recommended

candidate was then asked to send in a résumé of his career. According to Mackenzie, Nixon's adviser was merely trying to extend the list of potential candidates. Some appointments did apparently result from this *Who's Who* experiment, but Mackenzie wonders who people like Elvis Presley or Casey Stengel, the baseball manager, might have recommended for high office.

In Britain or Canada the parliamentary system makes choosing a new government simpler than it is in the United States, which operates under a presidential-congressional system of, in Richard Neustadt's phrase, separated institutions sharing powers. There is always a shadow government on the Opposition benches in Westminster or Ottawa, its members more or less known quantities and ready to take over the day after being elected. In the United States it is now something like seventy-five days before a newly elected President takes office and weeks, sometimes months, before his nominees move in. Before 1933, when an amendment to the Constitution was ratified, the interregnum used to run from early November to early March.

As a work of political science Mackenzie's book has many virtues, as is to be expected from a student of Samuel Beer. Its weakness lies in the prescriptions for reform of the system. Here the author violates my First Law of Democratic Politics: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The author wants to cure what he calls the "systematic pathologies in the appointment process." The therapy won't work, as the author half-concedes, because conflict and confrontation are so built into the process as to make them virtually ineradicable.

The reason for this is that everybody has a right, and in the case of the United States Senate, a constitutional right, to intervene in the case of any one of the 50,000-70,000 nominations which the President sends up to the Senate each year for confirmation. In terms of *le pays legal*, the President is responsible for several hundred thousand appointments throughout the national government. Most of these appointments are routine and therefore never get to the Senate; the power of appointment is then vested in the President alone, although he plays no active role in such appointments.

The real concern of the President and his personnel staff is how to find the "best" person for the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet jobs, for the independent agencies, regulatory commissions, directors of government corporations, ambassadors to major

posts and the Federal judges. These amount to some 500-600 positions, about half of which come under Senate scrutiny. The selection of nominees is dominated by the President, their confirmation by the Senate. That, too, is the way it is in *le pays legal*. But in terms of *le pays réel*, the confirmation and nomination processes must include other important but extra-constitutional influences - the career bureaucracies in Cabinet departments and other Federal agencies, which Arthur Schlesinger has called "the permanent government". Then there are the patronage-hungry political parties, and members of the House of Representatives.

Some Presidents have hated their appointive role; others have accepted it with resignation. William Howard Taft once remarked mournfully that "Every time I make an appointment, I create nine enemies and one ingrate." Lyndon Johnson engaged John W. Macy Jr as his personnel appointments officer and established for him criteria in making selection decisions. Even so, there were complaints, to which Johnson would utter a pious disclaimer: "Well, don't blame me. It's that God damn Macy. He insists on having merit."

Another reason for the occasional disruption of the nomination-confirmation process is that what may be in the interests of a new and transitional Chief Executive is not necessarily in the self-defined interest of "the permanent government". Anyone who has read the Crossman Diaries knows of the clashes between the Minister and his civil servants and understands how normal is the disjunction of interest between a strong-willed political Minister and an equally strong-willed Permanent Secretary. In the United States this problem is magnified because the bureaucracies usually have their own close lateral connections with an appropriate Congressional committee. This may explain why Vice-President Charles G. Dawes once noted that the President's natural enemies are the members of his own Cabinet, since the civil servants generally take over the running of the department and the Cabinet member as well.

In addition, there is the normal reluctance of qualified people to accept government service, often because it would mean a cut in earnings. "Our problem," said a White House recruiter in 1974, "is to get people who are earning \$350,000 a year to come to work for \$38,000." Any investments which might create a conflict of interest have to be sold or put in a "blind trust" during government service, and a binding, legally enforceable pledge given not

to accept employment for several years in any industry after leaving government service. There is also the scrutiny by the FBI of the candidate's past. But in spite of all this one of the most popular books in Washington, published by a House committee each time a new President is elected, is entitled *U.S. Government Policy and Supporting Positions*. According to Mackenzie, it is known colloquially as the "Pump Book", both because of the one-time colour of its cover and because the positions listed in the book are regarded as political pumps.

Mackenzie's proposed remedies for the appointive process are beyond objection in their intention and spirit but could only work if Presidents and Senators were angels. For example, the author wants appointments to be made on merit, and for there to be "a commitment to quality on the part of the people who control the process." Yet he accepts that there is no substantial consensus on the criteria that qualify individuals for presidential appointments. He more or less negates his call that appointments should be made on the basis of merit, by suggesting that the Senate ought occasionally to instruct the President explicitly as to what sector of the population or profession or economic class a nominee to a Federal post ought to come from. Mackenzie wants to reduce the appointment process to "a set of systematic generalizations" and thereby to eliminate complexity and unpredictability.

But the authors of the Constitution deliberately set out to make predictability impossible. They originally set up four different methods for selecting the leaders of the three branches of government: the President was to be chosen indirectly by an independent Electoral College, a method which time and tradition have altered; the judiciary was to be chosen by the President with the consent of the Senate; the Senators themselves were to be elected by the State Legislatures; and the House of Representatives was to be elected by popular vote. What could be more confusing? Somehow the appointive system has worked for almost two centuries, except by the exacting standards of contemporary social science. Perhaps one should recall the wise words of Professor Edward Banfield:

A political system is an accident... If the system works for almost two centuries, well on the whole, it is a lucky accident - the luckiest, indeed, that can befall a society... To meddle with the structure and operation of a successful political system is therefore the greatest foolishness that men are capable of.

communist goodwill towards democracy, based on competitive elections and coalition government, lasted until mid to late 1947. Most communist officials saw democracy as merely a slow and gradual rather than a rapid and revolutionary road to absolute power. They had a highly instrumental view of parliamentary democracy and thus did not hesitate to use mass pressure tactics and unconstitutional bodies such as the Action Committees and the People's Militia (the Communist Party's private army), whose significance Myant tends to underestimate.

The non-communist parties, on the other hand, continued to play the political game by traditional democratic rules. It was this strategic error, as well as the policy handicaps and organizational weaknesses which Myant highlights, that made non-communists so politically ineffective. After February 1948, when their rather naïve attempt to force a constitutional crisis by offering to resign from the coalition was eagerly seized upon by the communists to engineer a takeover of power, non-communist leaders were rapidly and forcibly removed from political life. Myant provides a useful account of the emergence of political dictatorship in the wake of the February takeover, yet it

casts further doubt on his general interpretation of communist thinking. Of course Soviet pressure was once again important; Stalin's advice, and the "advisers" he dispatched to Czechoslovakia, certainly made the purges more extensive and extreme than they might otherwise have been. But it is difficult to accept that the actual policy of eliminating all political opposition was largely imposed from outside on communist leaders whose receptivity to such ideas was due to a misguided acceptance of the "oversimplified version of Marxism" propagated by Moscow.

This is an interesting study of an important subject. Those concerned with the origins of communist rule should read this book even if they are likely to emerge unconvinced by its thesis that the Czechoslovak communists' road to socialism was paved with good democratic intentions.

Avian adoptions

By Christopher Lever

JOHN L. LONG:
Introduced Birds of the World
538pp. Newton Abbot: David and Charles. £15.
0 7153 8180 6

This scholarly, authoritative and well-researched book is the first to provide a comprehensive account of all man's attempts to introduce birds outside their natural range - both successfully and unsuccessfully throughout the world. It is a landmark in its field, which has hitherto been a much neglected branch of ornithology.

Why has man sought to alter artificially the natural distribution of birds? The reasons are many and various; nineteenth-century colonists of the Antipodes took with them song-birds as nostalgic reminders of home; many species have been translocated for aesthetic reasons, while gamebirds have been reared and released for sporting purposes; some birds have been introduced to new countries to combat insect pests - themselves often the result of unintentional introductions by man; others have become established after escaping or being released from captivity, while yet more have travelled from country to country as stowaways on board ship.

Unfortunately, many introduced birds have become serious pests in their adoptive homelands; in some cases they compete with native species for food and nesting sites, while in others they are vectors of parasites and diseases. In some countries the genetic purity of native species - which may already be rare - is endangered by hybridization with the newcomers. Agricultural damage - and this economic loss - has been caused all over the world by alien granivorous birds. Nor can exotics be relied on to remain in one place; the European starling and the house sparrow, for example, have successfully colonized most of North America from initial liberations in the eastern United States.

In spite of this somewhat gloomy picture, the majority of introduced birds have had a more or less neutral effect on their new surroundings, though very few - in Britain the insectivorous little owl is a notable exception - have proved positively beneficial. The breeding of endangered species in captivity for ultimate reintroduction to the wild is a valuable tool in the hands of the conservationist; the classic example of this is the re-establishment in Hawaii of the nene or Hawaiian goose, which was saved from near

extinction by the Wildfowl Trust in Britain.

In format John Long's invaluable book is both encyclopedic and comprehensive: an individual section, divided into a number of sub-headings, is devoted to each species; those describing distinguishing characteristics, general and introduced distributions, and general habits are kept to a minimum since, as Long points out, further details are easily available; to find these, references to recently published papers and to coloured illustrations of every species are provided; finally, information is given on the ecological impact, if any, of each alien bird on its new environment.

The bulk of each section gives detailed information, arranged systematically by country on the histories of the various introductions. Maps in the text show at a glance the natural distribution, introduced range, direction of migration - if any - and the success or failure of each introduction. Attractive and accurate line-drawings (some depicting only a detail) by Susan Tingay of most species (primarily those which have been introduced successfully) enhance the text. Tables showing introductions of individual avian families and a lengthy bibliography listing more than 2,000 references are also included.

A number of textual misprints in the sections describing birds introduced to the British Isles suggest the likelihood of others elsewhere, but this is well-nigh unavoidable in a work of this magnitude. Errors and omissions - again almost inevitable - seem to be few; the map for the American woodcock erroneously implies that this species is successfully established in Scotland, while that for the capercaillie - now thriving in the central and eastern Highlands of Scotland as the result of re-introductions in the nineteenth century - suggests a successful introduction to England.

My only real criticism - albeit perhaps a somewhat carping one - is the inclusion of a large number of introduced species which have failed to become successfully established; this seems of doubtful value and interest and tends to blur the overall picture; since many unsuccessful and unrecorded introductions have surely been attempted all over the world it must also increase the risk of omissions.

These, however, are minor points and in no way detract from the immense value of this important reference book. All credit to the Australian publishers, A. H. and A. W. Reed, who, in collaboration with the author's employers - the Agriculture Protection Board of Western Australia - have together produced a book of the highest quality which is a pleasure to handle.

Muddled molluscs

By Jean Mellanby

The Macdonald Encyclopedia of Shells
512pp. Macdonald. £4.95.
6 356 08575 9

The Macdonald Encyclopedia of Shells (translated from the Italian and prepared for the United States market), has many of some strengths and weaknesses as its companion volume *The Macdonald Encyclopedia of Trees*. As a compendium of detailed and technical notes on about 400 species in 357 entries about shells - that is, molluscs - with illustrations, coloured plates and distribution maps, it ought to be invaluable. Unfortunately, all the information is presented in such a way as to make it almost unusable. To identify any shell, unless you already know its scientific name, you would have to leaf through the entire volume. It is tedious to describe it as "an easy-to-use field guide", or as "the essential guide for beginners and experts alike".

Although recognizing their own method as unsatisfactory, the anonymous authors group their molluscs under five headings: (1) soft-surface molluscs, occurring in sand, mud and aquatic vegetation; (2) firm-surface molluscs, occurring in rocks, gravel and oyster beds; (3) coral dwellers; (4) other marine molluscs; (5) land and fresh-water molluscs. Within each group the entries are listed alphabetically, under the scientific name, regardless of class, order or family. This makes for great confusion. The entry *Ostrea vulgaris*, the common oyster, is followed by *Ostrea edulis*, the edible oyster, though the latter *O.* It is felt necessary to remove all the scaffolding of academic classification, some other intelligible framework is required; but not given here. Moreover, as the authors try to deal with shells from every part of the world, they cannot deal adequately with any one part in a way helpful to the local collector. Only a very few of the most common British species are mentioned. The serious student needs something better than this; the general reader will be baffled and the young collector all at sea.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Librarians

in Government Departments

There are vacancies in the following Government Departments for candidates with professional qualifications and some practical experience. (Those expecting to obtain professional qualifications this Summer will be considered.)

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS HQ
Departmental Library, Cheltenham.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Institute of Army Education, Wandsworth, London SW18.

Royal College of Defence Studies, Belgrave Square, London SW1.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
Main Library, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
Health and Safety Executive Library, Sheffield.

Further vacancies may arise in these and other Departments.

Salary £5270-£7245 (London up to £1087 higher). Starting salary may be above the minimum. Promotion prospects.

For further details and an application form (to be returned by 13 April, 1982) write to Civil Service Commission, Alencon Link, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1JB, or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 68551 (answering service operates outside office hours). Please quote ref: G(1)824.

DUBLIN
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN
(Grade 2)

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the post of Assistant Librarian (Grade 2) in the College Library. The post is in the English Language Library, and a degree in a relevant subject or previous experience in a library or engineering library, would be an advantage.

Salary scale IT65839-9,398 (under review).

Further particulars may be obtained from the Secretary and Bureau, Administration, University College Dublin, Dublin 4, to whom applications, together with curriculum vitae and the names and addresses of two referees, should be sent by Friday, April 16th.

LONDON

INNER LONDON EDUCATION AUTHORITY

LIBRARIANS
Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the post of Librarian (Grade 3) in the Inner London Education Authority. The post is in the English Language Library, and a degree in a relevant subject or previous experience in a library or engineering library, would be an advantage.

Salary scale IT65839-9,398 (under review).

Further particulars may be obtained from the Secretary and Bureau, Administration, University College Dublin, Dublin 4, to whom applications, together with curriculum vitae and the names and addresses of two referees, should be sent by Friday, April 16th.

GENERAL VACANCIES

Victoria and Albert Museum Curator in the National Art Library

This post carries special responsibility for the Library's collection of manuscripts which include illuminated and calligraphic items from the 12th to the 20th centuries, and an important collection of manuscript material relating to the history and techniques of fine and decorative arts. Work includes giving advice on acquisitions and liaising with relevant outside organisations. Occasional Saturday duties involved.

The person appointed will be expected to be, or to become, an authority on illumination and calligraphy, and will be required to improve and develop the collections and manuscripts.

Candidates must have a good working knowledge of Latin and two major foreign languages, and a good general knowledge of the history of art. Possession of a relevant degree with 1st or 2nd class honours, or an equivalent qualification, will be expected. Paleographical skills and a recognised library qualification advantageous.

SALARY (under review): as Curator Grade O E11,235-£16,096 or Curator Grade D E9,756-£12,850. Level of appointment and starting salary according to qualifications and experience.

For further details and an application form (to be returned by 30 March, 1982) write to Civil Service Commission, Alencon Link, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 1JB, or telephone Basingstoke (0256) 68551 (answering service operates outside office hours). Please quote ref: G(6)828.

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CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY AND GALLERY OF ORIENTAL ART

LIBRARIAN/ DIRECTOR

The Trustees invite applications for the above post. The person appointed will be responsible to the Trustees for the administration, management and supervision of the entire institution and its staff.

The post is a full-time appointment on the scale £17,052 (x7) - £21,220 (under review).

Further information is available from:

The Chester Beatty Library
and Gallery of Oriental Art,
20 Binswood Road,
Dublin 4.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 30 April, 1982.

SCOTTISH HEALTH SERVICE COMMON SERVICES AGENCY Liberian

Applications are invited from professionally qualified Librarians for the above post. Candidates should have the ability and experience to manage and develop the Division's library service to meet the needs of all professions engaged in the planning and construction of health buildings. Building library experience and knowledge of the Health Service would be an advantage. The Librarian will be based at the headquarters office in Glasgow, but will have responsibility for the smaller libraries in the local offices of the Division in Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Perth. The salary scale is £5,110-£5,984 per annum. Further particulars and application forms can be obtained from the Appointments Section, Common Services Agency, Trinity Park, Glasgow, G3 7LN. Tel: 043-555 6255. Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 30 March 1982. Please quote reference 14113/L6.

NORTH LONDON THE POLYTECHNIC OF LIBRARY AND LIBRARY ASSISTANT

Applications are invited for a post of Library Assistant in the above post.

The duties include work in the areas of lending services, book repairs, book conservation, periodicals and catalogues. Successful candidates must have a pleasant and outgoing manner, be able to work under pressure, and have the necessary ability to communicate clearly. An ability to communicate clearly is also an important requisite.

A degree is not essential, but a good education (to level 12 minimum) is necessary.

This post is not suitable for candidates who have Library School qualifications, and/or who are chartered.

Salary scale: £4,680 - £5,515 inclusive of London Allowance.

Written (please do not telephone for application form) and further details to: Edith Wright, Secretary, Polytechnic of North London, 100 Bow Road, London N7 8BB.

The closing date for completed applications is 30 March 1982. Please quote reference 14113/L6.